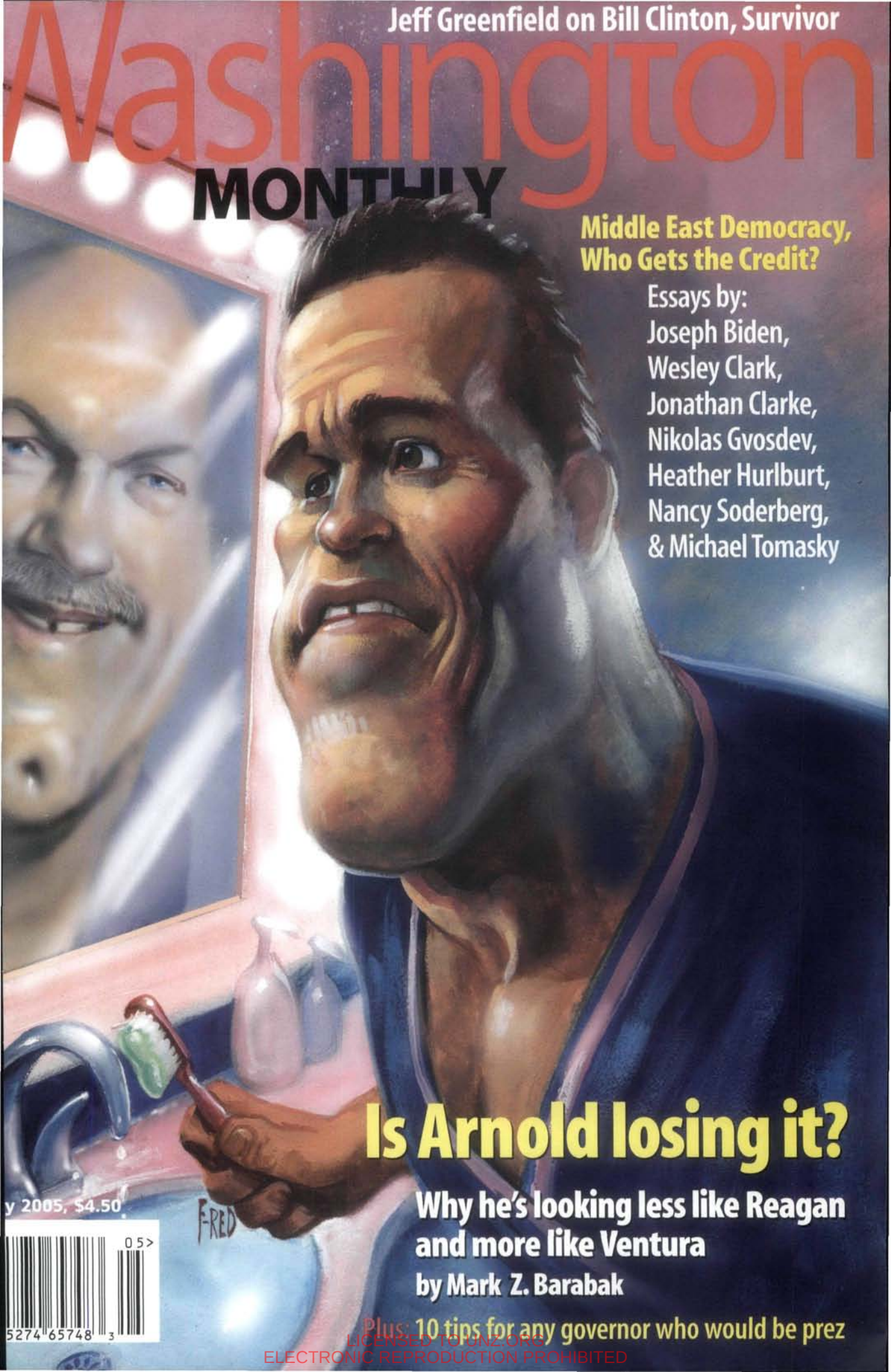
Washington MONTHLY

Jeff Greenfield on Bill Clinton, Survivor

Middle East Democracy, Who Gets the Credit?

Essays by:
Joseph Biden,
Wesley Clark,
Jonathan Clarke,
Nikolas Gvosdev,
Heather Hurlburt,
Nancy Soderberg,
& Michael Tomasky



Is Arnold losing it?

Why he's looking less like Reagan and more like Ventura

by Mark Z. Barabak

Plus: 10 tips for any governor who would be prez

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May 2005

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Letters

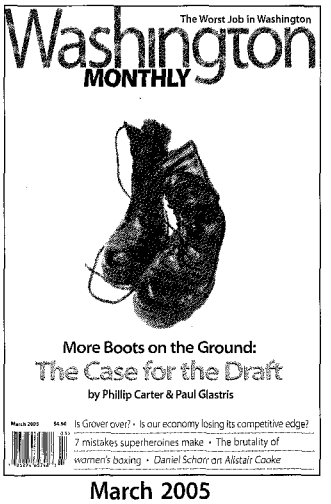
Service call

Phillip Carter and Paul Glastris's "The Case for the Draft" (March) is a valuable contribution to the debate over ameliorating the military "manpower crisis." I believe, however, that the conscription proposal and its alternative—the military or civilian service requirement for admission to a four-year college—need a lot of work before they might be practical.

As Carter, a former Army officer, knows well, there's no such thing as a "two-year enlistment," as the article seems to imply. Under current law, all initial enlistments are for eight years. The portion of the eight years not served on active duty remains an obligation for reserve service: if not in a unit, then in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). This continuing commitment, which many of my fellow reservists have found is no longer pro forma, would need to be retained in the authors' plan. Indeed, an extended reserve service commitment is the whole point of their plan—"a massive surge capacity of troops in reserve to quickly augment the active-duty force in times of emergency."

If there's political resistance now to a wholesale call up of reservists, imagine how much more there would be if most reservists were conscripts or collegians who will have served their two years, and who will be extremely reluctant to return for a wartime deployment (possibly being yanked out of the four-year college they'd already served two years on active duty just to get into). We might end up with a much larger but less well-trained reserve component comprised of soldiers far more resistant to being deployed than those we now have.

Under the proposed serve-if-you-want-to-go-to-college plan, class tensions in civilian life would likely be exacerbated because a four-year college degree would become a six-year degree (with the



March 2005

first two spent peeling potatoes, emptying bedpans, or patrolling the streets of Baghdad), leading the college grad cohort to consider itself even more of an elite than it now does. (Let me also point out that the nation's four-year colleges are unlikely to support this plan—to put it mildly.)

Peter Cachion
New York, N.Y.

It is about time someone outside of the enlisted ranks said this! I served in uniform for 26 years, on active duty and both active and inactive (ready) reserve, and was medically retired in May 2002. The draft that you outline is excellent—I see the need for just two changes in policy for it to work properly:

1. The military must change its attitude regarding sexual orientation. (The current "in country shortage" could have been eliminated by simply not discharging the 7,000 to 10,000 gay troops who have been let go because of don't ask/don't tell.) If everyone who wants to go to college must serve, then there can be no restrictions on who may serve. I served as an "out" gay soldier for most of my career, and there was no reduction in "unit cohesion" in any unit that I served in. In fact, most of my fellow soldiers were supportive, and none ever had any problem taking orders from me.

2. Bring back the "conscientious objector status." When I first joined the Army, I enlisted as a conscientious objector. I was able to serve in a "non-combat" military occupational skill (MOS).

I served as an administration specialist for all of my 26 years, but President Reagan removed the conscientious objector status for military personnel. Many troops in support positions left the military at that time.

John Keeber
Warren, Mich.

Not over yet

I write to take exception with the article by Daniel Franklin and A.G. Newmyer III ("Is Grover Over?" March). The authors claim that the "No-New-Taxes" stance is losing in the states, yet they draw their conclusions by conveniently omitting trends that counter their argument.

While Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels's proposal to raise taxes took many by surprise, the House of Representatives quickly rebuked him by passing a no-tax-increase budget. Beyond Indiana, the authors indicate that the pro-taxpayer movement is losing steam. Wrong: For the past three years, taxpayers have clearly rejected tax increases at the polls, in Virginia, Alabama, Oregon, California, Seattle, Vermont, and Washington State. In the 2004 primary elections, taxpayers ousted a significant number of tax hikers, in North Carolina, Kansas, Wisconsin, Nevada, and other states.

The article correctly states that the fight now moves to Virginia but exaggerates the goals of the pro-taxpayer movement. Defeating only one or two of the tax hikers would send a clear enough message. In fact, taxpayers have already scored two victories: Sen. Ken Stolle was denied a chance for higher office, and Del. James Dillard folded under pressure and resigned.

The current number of signers of the Taxpayer Protection Pledge is not 1,200 but 1,247, and more than 90 percent of them kept their commitment last year. This year, too,

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tax increases have already been defeated. Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi shored up support for his "No-New-Taxes" position in the state Senate, and a Pledge signer single-handedly killed a tax increase. Lawmakers in Kentucky took to heart the concerns of taxpayer groups, and a previously flawed and tax increase-laden budget now looks revenue neutral.

The pro-taxpayer movement in the states may not be quite as far along as the movement at the national level. Pledge signers in Congress (currently 222 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, 46 senators, and President Bush) have made sure that no tax increase has been passed in a decade and have secured four tax cuts in four years. Yet the movement in the states is clearly going in the right direction. The number of Pledge signers has increased from 773 in 1997 to 1,247 today, an increase of more than 60 percent. Mind you, Rome wasn't built in a day, either.

Grover Norquist
President, Americans for Tax Reform

Unneccesary audits

I read with interest the article "The Worst Job in Washington" (by Daniel Franklin, March). The real question is why does the FEC need to audit the campaigns of those who lose? The danger of money in politics is that the candidate, when in office, will give favors to the donors to the campaign. A losing campaign does not have this problem. Eliminating audits of losing campaigns would save money and time and eliminate the worst job in Washington.

Arthur Arfa
Via email

Kind disagreement

Although he is junior to me in years, I yield to no one in my admiration for the superior wisdom of Charles Peters in every field of human endeavor—with several notable exceptions. One is his strange fixation on reviving the military draft, despite the obvious pleasure that such a move would bring to the gang of adventurers now populating the White House and the Pentagon.

Another strange fixation is his belief in overworking young professionals despite the obvious losses in productivity and even human lives (remember Libby Zion?) caused by such behavior.

I must admit that, in my work life, I frequently put in 60-hour workweeks. But I never forced my subordinates to do the same—probably because I remembered a remark attributed to that noblest of men, Gen. George C. Marshall. When an apple-polishing young officer told Marshall that he'd worked long into the night to complete an assigned project, Marshall replied, "Any officer who cannot complete an assignment within normal working hours should have that failure noted in his fitness report."

William M. Burke
San Francisco, Calif.

Charles Peters replies:
I am grateful for the kind words on our disagreement. I believe that if the sons and daughters of the influential served in the military, their parents would not support military adventurers in Washington. On overworking young professionals, I have always opposed the medical slave drivers. As for the rest, my views have become more benign. I hope Mr. Burke read my note on Marjorie Williams in our March issue.

CORRECTION:
In "The Good Fight" by Amy Sullivan (March), Jim Wallis was identified as "an ordained minister in the American Baptist Church." In fact, Wallis is an ordained pastor of the Church of Sojourners, a worshipping community affiliated with *Sojourners* magazine.

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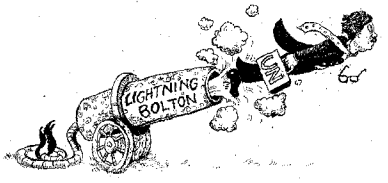
Tilting at **Windmills**

by **Charles Peters**, founding editor

You'll just love Timbuktu

The best explanation for why Condoleezza Rice gave John Bolton the U.N. job instead of keeping him on at State comes from *Time*'s James Carney, who says she "didn't want Bolton freelancing under her the way he had under Powell." Although both Machiavelli and the Mafia counsel keeping your enemies close, veteran bureaucrats know better. Their solution: Get your enemy out of town and into a job that poses minimal threat to you. Shrewd Third-World rulers mastered this ploy long ago. They make their enemies ambassadors to posts desirable enough for them to accept, but remote enough to render them harmless.



But co-ed naked frolics are no fun with your parents around

The ACLU, while clearly laudable in purpose, sometimes displays a curious sense of priority. The latest example comes from Virginia, where the ACLU is attacking a statute that requires a parental presence at nudist camps for juveniles. Such a camp for youngsters between 11 and 17 was conducted in 2003 at White Tail Park—yes, that is the correct name. Virginia's General Assembly passed a law that requires each participant at these teen and preteen nudist camps to be accompanied by a parent, grandparent, or legal guardian. The ACLU's Rebecca Glenberg contends that the law denies the right to "a normal camp experience."

Oh, *that* email

"No analytical judgments were changed in response to political pressure," concludes the Bush commission's 601-page report on intelligence failures leading up to the war in Iraq. Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek* was curious: Had the commission considered the email sent Feb. 4, 2003, by a senior CIA official that rebuked underlings who questioned the now totally discredited intelligence provided by the source called Curve Ball? "What email?" replied Lawrence Silberman, the commission's co-chairman. "I'm mystified." Later, after Isikoff had provided the commission with a copy of the email, a commission spokesman told him "that the panel was aware of it, but chose not to include it because its contents were already known." But apparently not to Silberman.

The email had said: "Keep in mind the fact that this war's going to happen regardless of what Curve Ball said or didn't say and that the Powers That Be probably aren't terribly interested in whether Curve Ball knows what he's talking about."

What about Molly?

The Washington Post says it has difficulty finding women columnists. Why don't they publish Molly Ivins more than once or twice a year? She is one of the great liberal voices, both wise and funny. Even when you disagree with her, she's a delight to read. I won't comment on the relative intellectual merits of the other *Post* columnists, but I will say that lightness is not one of their notable characteristics.

But Paris gets an extra Bentley

Last month, the House voted to end the estate tax. This has to be one of the greatest propaganda triumphs of the Bush administration. And that's saying something because the boys have done pretty well in this area. When the administration came to power in 2001, only 49,911 decedents had estates large enough to be affected by the tax. That was only 2.1 percent of all the people who died that year. Yet by calling the tax a "Death Tax," and selling the public on the idea that it was unfair to tax them for dying, the Republicans seem likely to succeed in eliminating a valuable source of revenue, one that was notable for hitting only those who could afford it. In 2001, the average estate taxed was worth $2.7 million.

Now, the Democrats seem to think that their best hope is to limit the tax to estates worth $3.5 million or more. We're not talking here about the estates of the family farmer or the small businessman that proponents of estate tax abolition say they worry about. Yet the Republicans refuse to settle for even the $3.5 million figure, which has been proposed by Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-N.D.). They demand total repeal of the tax. This, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, will cost the Treasury, meaning all of us, $290 billion by 2015.

Dumb intelligence

"The dreadful mediocrity of the intelligence community," writes David Ignatius, a columnist for *The Washington Post*, "is its most striking characteristic." Of all that has been written about the problems of our spy agencies, this is the truest. We need "smarter people," writes Ignatius, "We don't need a proliferation of new, inexperienced intelligence officers overseas who will fill quotas by recruiting bogus agents who produce large volumes of low-quality intelligence. We need real spies."

The problem is that real spies not only have to be smart, they must also be courageous. That's a hard bill to fill. And that, far more than reorganization, is the real challenge we must

Art by Molly Crabapple

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face if we want better intelligence.

There's no Harvard Club of Ft. Bragg

Part of the problem may be a recent shortage of bravery among our intellectual elite. Four hundred and thirteen Harvard men lost their lives in World War I, according to the Harvard *Gazette*. This is truly remarkable. Of the scores—surely more than 100—of Harvard alumni who graduated after the 1950s and who I've met during my 44 years in Washington, I know of only one who had served in the military. I know some of these people well enough to know they're not cowards. So, could it be a failure of patriotism? Or, what seems more likely to me, an unwillingness to enter public service except at or near the top. The problem is, unless there are smart and courageous people down below, good people at the top can't make a difference.

Color coding

National Geographic offered readers of its April issue a choice of covers, and of cover stories. If you live in Washington, the cover story was "Lost World of the Little People," illustrated by a photo of a black hominid. In Richmond, the cover story was "The Civil War, Then and Now: The Fight to Preserve America's Sacred Ground," illustrated by a photograph of a Civil War soldier.

David Brooks, sleazebuster

Did you see David Brooks's "Masters of Sleaze" column? It demonstrated that he could supply the ironic moral voice desperately needed by today's conservatives:

"Back in 1995, when Republicans took over Congress, a new cadre of daring and original thinkers arose.... [Y]ou no longer had to choose between being an activist and a lobbyist. You could be both.... And best of all, you could get rich while doing it....

Although both Machiavelli and the Mafia counsel keeping your enemies close, veteran bureaucrats know better.

"Before long, folks like [Grover] Norquist and [Jack] Abramoff were talking up the virtues of international sons of liberty like Angola's Jonas Savimbi and Congo's dictator Mobutu Sese Seko—all while receiving compensation from these upstanding gentlemen...

"Tom DeLay's former chief of staff helped run the U.S. Family Network, which supported the American family by accepting large donations and leasing skyboxes at the MCI Center.

"Ralph Reed, meanwhile, smashed the tired old categories that used to separate social conservatives from corporate consultants. Reed signed on with Channel One, Verizon, Enron and Microsoft to shore up the moral foundations of our great nation. Reed so strongly opposes gambling as a matter of principle that he bravely accepted $4 million through Abramoff from casino-rich Indian tribes to gin up a grassroots campaign."

Feeding the cash cow

The clever lobbyist knows to warn his clients that a plot against their interests is being hatched by Washington bureaucrats or Congress. Fear tends to loosen the client's wallet. Robert Leonard, a former staffmember of the House Ways and Means Committee, explains this strategy to the *Post*'s Jeffrey Birnbaum, telling him of the time he gave lobbyists a memo listing potential tax increases. At first they were outraged: "How dare you ... Surely, you're kidding. You can't do this to me!" Then Leonard reminded them, "Hey ...It's good for business." After a couple of seconds of reflection they agreed, and sent copies of the memo to their home office, asking, "See how much you need me?" Birnbaum says the K Street crowd is currently stirring up business by citing the deficit as a reason why tax increases are coming, softening up the client for bigger lobbying bills to come.

Cheaper chic

Much of the front page of a recent Style section in *The New York Times* was devoted to a photograph of a chic young man wearing a seersucker suit that costs $1,020. I recall checking seersucker prices as a student at Columbia in the spring of 1946. Could I afford one? Yes, even at Brooks Brothers, the cost was only $19.

We're sure that new heart valve is in perfect condition...

There have been many reports about the FDA's failure to monitor the performance of drugs after they've been approved. Now comes news that they failed to adequately monitor the performance of medical devices like heart valves that the agency has approved. Barry Meier of *The New York Times* has highlighted a FDA report that says, in Meier's words, "that the agency had little idea whether device manufacturers were fulfilling their obligations to conduct studies on the safety of products once they were on the market."

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We could have prevented the epidemic, but the monitor was a little high on the wall

This failure to find out what happens when the rubber meets the road is, as we never tire of pointing out, a common shortcoming of Washington. Another *Times* story, which like the FDA one, was buried on a back page, reveals that the EPA is failing to check up on the performance of the BioWatch air monitors that have been installed in 30 metropolitan areas to detect the release of such biological agents as anthrax, smallpox, and plague. The EPA's inspector general has found that some of the monitors are installed too high or too low, others too far apart or with obstructed air passages, and that in any case not enough care is taken to make sure that the monitors are regularly inspected and properly maintained.

Overlooking oversight

This failure to find out what's going on extends to the Congress. Consider its oversight of the Department of Homeland Security. Although the Department's own inspector general and the GAO have issued many reports—in the case of the GAO, more than 100—citing lapses in airport security, watch-list shortcomings, lax cargo security, lost and stolen passports, and immigration non-enforcement among many troubling subjects, Audrey Hudson of *The Washington Times* reports that the House Homeland Security Committee held only 15 oversight hearings in 2003 and 2004. Rep. Christopher Cox (R-Calif.), the committee's chairman, explained that the committee was, in Hudson's words, "top-heavy with chairmen of other committees, making scheduling difficult." Cox says the committee now has new members, and promises that the situation will improve. In the Senate, there is little hope for improvement, since responsibility for oversight of Homeland Security was assigned to the Governmental Affairs Committee that already oversees many other agencies. Last year, for example, its main energy went to the reform of the intelligence community.

Mohammed Harvey Goldstein certainly has to rank among the more intriguing names I've ever encountered. Did some monumental spiritual struggle lead to its adoption?

Labored relations

A Maryland employer has just been accused by the National Labor Relations Board of "such unfair practices as reprimanding workers petitioning for employment benefits and job reassignments." The same organization has been charged by the IRS with avoiding the payment of payroll taxes. And Maryland's Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation has found that the organization has failed to pay both state workers' compensation and unemployment insurance. You're thinking this must be Wal-Mart. No, it's the Maryland State Teachers' Association.

Now you can actually understand the disclaimer

Two pieces of good news on the health front. Johnson & Johnson, instead of following the example of other pharmaceutical companies and mentioning drug risk sotto voce in its commercials, is giving the risk equal time. J&J's ads for the Ortho Evra birth control patch have split screens, with half devoted to a doctor describing the risks and side effects. Of course, I'm still for taking all drug ads off television. But J&J's approach is a definite improvement over the hard sell we've been getting from other pharmaceutical companies.

The other good news comes from Medicare, which is posting data on its Web site comparing how well hospitals perform in treating heart attacks, heart failure, and pneumonia. You can find out which hospitals have the best records for dealing with your ailment.

Doctors without borders

This kind of information has been notoriously hard to come by. A recent *Washington Post* series shows how nearly impossible it is to find out about incompetent physicians, and what a poor job medical societies do in disciplining them. Of course, this is one of those stories that reporters can do any year they have a little spare time. I know the problem has existed as long as I can remember. Indeed, stories about it have been done several times and noted in this column. But there is never the kind of follow-up that would hound medical societies to reform.

Remember, there is a Peters Solution to this problem. It would also take care of Medicare lawsuits. We should put injuries and death caused by malpractice on a no-fault basis so that victims could recover their losses automatically without lawsuit. But in return for giving doctors this freedom from the threat of bankruptcy, we should take away their control over licensing. Medical licensing boards could still have a few doctors to provide the necessary expertise, but they should be dominated by laymen who have every reason to discipline the incompetent and none to conceal them.

Not with my money!

You may remember an item in this column a couple of years ago about how Princeton had taken a fund, now worth $600 million, donated by Charles and Marie Robinson to help prepare students

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for careers in public service, and used it for other purposes. Well, it appears Princeton is not getting away with it. The Robinsons sued; the suit attracted publicity. The result: Donations from alumni dropped 45 percent last year while giving to other colleges and universities rose 34 percent.

Get me a rewrite!

Where is the editor? I kept asking that question as I read a *Washington Post* article headlined "D.C. Schools Could Cut 395 Staff Positions." The first question that seemed not to have been asked of the author was: Is there any effort being made to distinguish between the good teachers and bureaucrats and the bad ones? In other words, will the cut target the right people?

The article says that the cuts are necessary to pay for a teacher pay raise and "step increases that teachers will be owed." I doubt that readers who are not bureaucrats themselves will know—and the article does not explain—that step increases are also pay increases, supposedly based on merit but in the federal civil service granted almost automatically to 99 percent of those eligible. Are the D.C. step increases also given without regard to merit? And is the other pay raise similarly unrelated to performance?

The article quotes George Parker, president of the Washington Teachers' Union, as saying that "it would be difficult to justify [the cuts]...when the city has a surplus." The city's Treasury is unusually flush at the moment, so the issue Parker raises is a legitimate one. But the article does not deal with it.

I'm sure there were excuses for these issues not being raised by an editor. The reporter may have been on a tight deadline, for example. But there is no excuse for the fact that at most newspapers, most of the time, not nearly enough of these sorts of questions are raised by the editors.

They do, after all, run the city

"Revoke Club U's License, D.C. Says," is the headline over another article in the *Post*'s Metro section that could have benefited from the attention of a curious editor. You will recall that the U is a go-go club in the basement of the Frank D. Reeves Municipal Center, which houses offices of the D.C. government. The article says "Mayor Anthony A. Williams (D), Police Chief Charles H. Ramsey, City Administrator Robert C. Bobb and D.C. Council member Jim Graham (D-Ward 1) want to close the club," but it fails to ask or answer the obvious: Why don't they just close it? Nor does the article delve into the equally obvious question of why a go-go club was permitted in a city building in the first place.

The decline of the A-cup

The performance of one medical device, the silicon breast implant, *has* received attention from the FDA—and from the media. FDA hearings on the implant's safety, the approval of one manufacturer's version, and the disapproval of another were lead stories on ABC's "World News Tonight" and in *The New York Times*. Why so much attention for this one device, I wondered? I imagined it to be of concern to only a small number of women. I asked my wife if she had an explanation. She said she wasn't sure this explained everything, but that when she was growing up, the majority of women, if not downright flat-chested, were not conspicuously well-endowed. Today, the majority is a minority.

Ever wonder why we put innocent people on death row?

Sean Reilly of Newhouse News Service supplies another example of how Congress often fails to put its money where its mouth is. Four years ago they enacted what was supposed to be a $482 million program to clear up the backlogs in forensic crime laboratories that were preventing evidence from reaching the judicial system in a timely manner. This is not a trivial matter. We're talking about evidence that can spare the innocent and convict the guilty. It took 13 months for the sample given by Christa Worthington's murderer to be analyzed by Massachusetts labs. But Congress has appropriated just $35 million, considerably less than one-10th of the amount it promised.

A Jew and a Muslim walk into a bar...

Mohammed Harvey Goldstein certainly has to rank among the more intriguing names I've ever encountered. Did some monumental spiritual struggle lead to its adoption? Not exactly. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, Goldstein is a lobbyist in Indonesia who added Mohammed to honor his Muslim bride. It is also possible that the name eased Goldstein's access to the Indonesian officials he lobbies. That access is also helped by the fact that Goldstein is Gambia's consul to Indonesia. "The red, blue, and green flag of Gambia, a country of 1.4 million on the West Coast of Africa, hangs outside the entrance to Goldstein's Jakarta office," reports the *Journal*, which was unable to discover how he secured his diplomatic appointment. I have no excuse for running this item, except to say that I'm fascinated to learn that a man who began life as an American named Harvey Goldstein could end up an African diplomat in a Muslim country in Asia.

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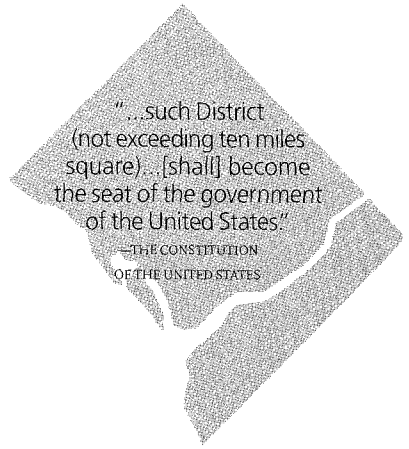
10 MILES SQUARE



Out of the Club

Why a conservative powerhouse booted its founder.

By Chris Cillizza

If they ever make a political "Behind the Music"—and at this point, anything is possible at the networks—the Club for Growth is a sure candidate for one of the first episodes. That may surprise many liberals, who often think of the entire conservative movement as a disciplined unit that brooks no dissent and therefore suffers no internal disputes. But then they probably missed the news earlier this year that the Club for Growth, the leading national fundraising group for fiscally conservative candidates, had parted ways with Stephen Moore, the Club's chief executive, public face, and, in recent years, perhaps the Beltway's most influential right-wing power broker. Although the move took place with little fanfare and practiced civility, both sides have quickly turned on each other, revealing a long-running fight between Moore and several members of the Club's board over how best to use its ever-increasing power.

It had started out so well. The Political Club for Growth was formed in the early 1980s by a group of roughly two dozen New York businessmen who interviewed candidates for office, testing their conservative bona fides on fiscal issues and rewarding acceptable political hopefuls with a pocketful of checks. It was an effective, but relatively small effort, and Moore had been involved peripherally from the beginning—coming to meetings and giving counsel. By the late 1990s, Moore—then a fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute—began to push for a full-time role, arguing that, under his leadership, the Club could become a key player in conservative Washington.

He was right. Moore convinced the group's founders to allow him to remake the Club with a harder edge—exacting a political pound of flesh from politicians who did not share their fiscal policy of tax cuts, balanced budgets, and more tax cuts. In 1999, Moore (along with his partners, the conservative financier Richard Gilder and *National Review* publisher Thomas "Dusty" Rhodes) rechristened the group the Club for Growth and immediately started

JARGON WATCH:

Texas tends to lend itself to crazy, Dan Rather-like "stuck like a prickly frog in a cactus" sayings, and the ethics woes of Tom DeLay are no exception.

"Being called vindictive and partisan by Tom DeLay is like being called ugly by a frog."
—Ronnie Earle, Texas D.A., investigating DeLay

"Being accused of character assassination by Tom DeLay is like being accused of being silly by the Three Stooges."
—Barney Frank, Air America

"Being called contemptible by Tom DeLay is like being called a thug by Tony Soprano."
—Michael King, Austin Chronicle

"Having your environmental integrity questioned by Tom DeLay is like having your table manners criticized by Jabba the Hutt."
—Dennis Hayes, chair of Earth Day

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spending their cash funding primary campaigns against Republican fiscal doves. (Moore coined the term RINO—"Republicans In Name Only"—to describe his targets.) Driven by the fundraising technique of "bundling," a process whereby the Club serves as a conduit for donations that are then directed to candidates, the Club took off. By 2002, the organization had contributed $3 million to candidates around the country; in the 2004 election cycle, it raised $22 million ($75 million in campaign contributions) from more than 30,000 members and helped elect 16 new members of Congress, a 75 percent success rate. Moore's team was more responsible than any other group for the Republican purge of party moderates that has driven much of GOP politics during the Bush years; when *National Review* put Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) on its cover with the headline "The Worst Republican Senator," insiders saw traces of Moore's hand.

But as they say on the show, underneath the surface...[cue dramatic music]...trouble was brewing.

The very qualities that had initially made Moore an ideal spokesman and leader of the organization—his take-no-prisoners, blustery manner, and particularly his spotlight-hogging ways—had begun to grate on his fellow Club members. An August 2003 *New York Times Magazine* cover story on the group that featured Moore particularly irked his co-founders, according to several well-placed sources within the Club. His brash personality dominated the piece, overshadowing the efforts of Gilder and Rhodes. Always quick with a colorful quote, Moore boasted that Sen. Specter was "wetting his pants" over the Club's support for Congressman Pat Toomey in the Pennsylvania Repub-

Micro-Profile:

The Democrats' Tom DeLay

By Hans Nichols

It was a typical Tuesday evening at the Capitol. Most lawmakers, many straight from the airplane, rushed past the ushers to cast the week's first vote before slumping in their seats, quietly chatting with pals while adjusting to the pace of Congress. Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.), a 6'4" Queens Irishman and the son of a New York City cop, stood out, badgering colleagues, tapping on the shoulders of the members of the Democratic leadership.

From such vigorous floor bonhomie, you'd think Crowley, 43, was fishing for support in his bid to become the vice-chair of the House Democratic Caucus, the party's fourth-highest slot. He wasn't. Crowley was whipping for votes in favor of the pending bankruptcy reform bill, a piece of business-friendly legislation destined for easy passage, despite the deep-seated opposition from a clear majority of the Democratic caucus. The bill, one of the most crucial to come to the floor so far this Congress, drew the ire of liberals by making it far harder for working families to claim bankruptcy protection from credit card companies. Why would Crowley, at the beginning of a potentially two-year-long leadership race, risk antagonizing so many of his colleagues by siding with business?

On the other side of the aisle, the answer is obvious: K Street. Working outside of his party leadership, Crowley had taken it upon himself to signal to the business community that Democrats could be serious about promoting a business agenda. Borrowing a page from the Republican playbook, he summoned a group of white shoe lobbyists to the Capitol and gave them marching orders to shore up support among wavering Democrats.

"[I told them] they need to express their concerns about the misinformation that's being given to members," Crowley told me. The business lobbyists who worked the Democratic side could hardly contain their glee. Finally, someone on their side got it: K Street—with all its PAC money and campaign expertise—doesn't mind swinging both ways. Finally, a Democrat was not ashamed to do business' bidding.

It's a peculiar gambit. Some Democrats are trying to attract a bigger share of K Street's attention despite having precious little of the only currency K Street recognizes: power. Even so, Washington's moneymen are always eager to invest in the status quo, and they will probably offer just enough money to make Democrats in safe seats feel safer. But it's hard to see what voters may like about this deal. For the moment, they seem to be warming to the Democrats' depiction of Republicans in Congress as corrupt, thanks to Tom DeLay's troubles. Whether or not Democrats vote Crowley into leadership promises to show which route Democrats think can best lead them back to power: running through K Street, or against it.

Hans Nichols is a reporter for *The Hill*.

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The Washington Monthly's

Monthly Journalism Award

Eric Nalder

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

March 22-25, 2005

While investigating an unreported Puget Sound oil spill by a tanker for energy giant ConocoPhillips in early 2004, the *Post-Intelligencer* discovered a regulatory regime that had withered away, tanker operators who were flouting the rules and a climate of performance that threatens a repeat of the 1994 Exxon Valdez disaster. Nalder also exposes a continuing culture of alcohol abuse among ship workers and captains in the Pacific Northwest, and warns that tanker operators are playing fast and loose with the regulations set up to try to prevent another Valdez.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including a copy of the article or broadcast text) to The Washington Monthly Journalism Award, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20005. Or email us at editors@washingtonmonthly.com.

lican primary and claimed that he would soon have Specter's "scalp" on his wall (a particularly ill-considered remark since Specter had temporarily lost his hair a few years earlier while undergoing treatment for brain cancer).

"[The story] set the other people into a negative mode that never reversed," acknowledges Art Laffer, an economist and former Club board member who considers himself a Moore ally. And Moore's decidedly odd personality quirks only made relations worse.

Club loyalists charge that Moore was a micromanager who was either unwilling or unable to cede control of even the most minute tasks—even insisting on opening every piece of mail that came through the office. Because he was often on the road, that policy meant the bundled checks that the Club delivers to candidates in primary campaigns (the Club's central activity) often arrived embarrassingly late. In one case, according to club insiders, Moore sent Rep. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) $25,000 in bundled contributions to fight a primary challenger after the congressman had already won his race. Moore's critics within the organization believe the unusual micromanaging of incoming mail contributed to several losses by Club-endorsed candidates in the last election cycle. Not so, says Moore, who says he was just doing his job by combing through new contributions to make sure the biggest donors received personal thank-you letters.

But his critics say that Moore became star-struck by major donors and party bigwigs and lost his ideological way, abandoning their original vision for the Club and letting relationships affect his decision-making about which candidates the organization should support. They point to Moore's backing of moderate Reps. Katherine Harris (R-Fla.) and Chris Chocola (R-Ind.) as examples of candidates whose fiscal views were poor fits for the Club but who were personally tight with Moore. When beer magnate Pete Coors walloped former congressman and outspoken fiscal conservative Bob Schaffer in the Colorado Republican senatorial primary after Moore insisted the Club remain neutral, board members rebelled, demanding that the CEO be removed.

Moore says he never saw it coming. "We were soaring," he told me. He believed the results of the 2004 election would alleviate any internal problems: "It is unusual to fire the coach after he wins the national championship." But success didn't change the board's mind. They replaced their lead singer with now-former Rep. Pat Toomey, the same Toomey who had failed to knock off Arlen Specter in Pennsylvania.

Now, Steve Moore has gone off to pursue a solo career, starting a new group of his own, the Free Enterprise Fund—the Wings of conservative fundraising, to the Club's Beatles. The Club, meanwhile, continues to rake in dollars and stir up controversy—most recently with a television ad campaign attacking Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) for being insufficiently supportive of President Bush's plans to privatize Social Security. It's too early to assess the damage done to the Club and to Moore as a result of the split, but Moore is sure that his former organization will never be the same without him, becoming like the Police without Sting or Bon Jovi without Jon. "It is kind of a tragedy," he says. "Everyone agrees the Club will never be the political powerhouse it once was."

Chris Cilliza is a reporter for *Roll Call*.

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Dear Abu

How to get the attention of al Qaeda's managing editor.

By Jamie Malanowski

BAGHDAD, Iraq—A new online magazine purportedly posted by al-Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq has launched an effort to recruit Muslims to rid Iraq of infidels and apostates....The colorful, well-designed magazine is named Zurwat al-Sanam, Arabic for "The Tip of the Camel's Hump"—a reference among Islamic militants to "the epitome of belief and virtuous activity"... [C]ounterterrorism expert Evan Kohlmann told the Associated Press the magazine aims at "conveying the sense that the organization is professional, capable and really understands what they're doing."...Abu Maysara al-Iraqi, the designated "media coordinator" for [al Qaeda in Iraq], posted the magazine on the Internet late Wednesday.

—The Associated Press, March 3, 2005

Dear Mr. al-Iraqi:

Congratulations on your new magazine! This is probably the best start-up since Bobby Guccione Jr. did *Spin* in the mid-80s. (Do you know Bob? He and I haven't spoken in years, but I'm pretty sure he'd recommend me.) I particularly love the title! I'm sure everybody was telling you to call it *Al Qaeda Weekly* or *Terrorist Living* or something safe. *The Tip of the Camel's Hump*, however, is distinctive—like *Wigwag*! Nobody's going to Google it and get a dry cleaner.

Listen, I'm sure you're very happy with your content right now, but I just wanted to put my name in the mix in case you want some softer, feature-driven stuff. I know I'm an infidel, but I'd still love to do a travel column for you guys. From what I read, your organization has all these fellows flying hither and yon. Wouldn't it be a service to them to tell them how to get the best deals on airfare, hotels, and rental cars? Plus, we could do more tourist-oriented stuff. I gather when you guys visit a town you try to scope out all the large buildings and popular tourist attractions. But what about in the evenings? Maybe your guys would like to hear about some nice jazz clubs. What do you think?

Sincerely yours,

Dear Mr. al-Iraqi:

Thanks for sending me the nice pre-printed postcard. As it happens, I do not read Arabic, but let me guess: You thanked me for my letter and invited me to try you again. Well, here goes.

The magazine's called *The Tip of the Camel's Hump*, right? Right away, I'm thinking of a "Best of" guide—a two page front-of-the-book feature that's all about the tips of whatever camel humps are out there. You could do the best sports car or the best golf club or the best demolition ignition trigger—whatever. You could rate them. Prada: four humps! Kalashnikov: four humps! It would be your signature.

Now, I know you're thinking: "Nice idea, but we could do that in-house." Can you really? You guys have a lot on your plate. This kind of feature involves detail. Are we going to use pick-up art, or are we going to shoot the thing? There's a lot of dealing with publicists, who, as you know, can be a wee bit difficult. Perhaps you're thinking that being one of the world's top terrorist organizations would insure that you get prompt callbacks, but why risk it? Think about why you're publishing *The Tip of the Camel's Hump* in the first place. You're not going to convince anybody that your organization is professional and capable and really understands what it's doing by using interns.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Mr. al-Iraqi:

I haven't heard back from you on my last idea yet, but this one's big, and it really can't wait. Are you guys interested in Lindsay Lohan?

Because I think I can get her. I recently ran into a friend of her manager. He asked what I've been up to. I said a little of this, a little of that, and then I mentioned that I've been talking to *The Tip of the Camel's Hump*. Well, he was pretty impressed. Apparently, Lindsay is very interested in current affairs and feels she has some views she'd like to express.

You certainly know your readers better than I do, but she seems perfect for your demographic—the kind of girl guys like and girls want to be like (not that we care what they think!). Moreover, I think she'd be willing to pose, and I hear Dave LaChapelle has been very keen to shoot somebody in a chador. I know you guys are busy with the insurgency and whatnot, but please let me know; she'll probably want to time this to support the release of *Herbie: Fully Loaded* in June.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Abu,

Thanks once again for being so understanding about the Lindsay Lohan thing, but that's how flighty these celebrities are. I'm sorry you sold space against it. Thanks in particular for getting the fatwa against me lifted.

The Tip of the Camel's Hump has been looking great! I'm delighted that you've been using some of my ideas. The "What's on Osama's iPod?" piece got humongous pick-up here. Sting was on Leno saying he's amazed at how many bookings he got as a result.

How about this: "You + 70 Virgins = Paradise"? I know—it's just a headline, but I'm sure we could flesh it out in some cool, *Maxim*-y way. Lunch at Michael's next week?

All the best,

— **Jamie Malanowski** is a writer in New York.

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Statehouse to White House

10 hot policy ideas for the governor who would be president.

By The Editors
Illustrations by William Brown

Four of our last five presidents, and seven of the last 14 party nominees, have been governors. There's a good reason for that. Unlike, say, senators, who debate and vote for a living, governors are executives who create and manage real programs. Voters can judge the effectiveness of those programs and use them as proxies for what the candidate might do as president. In 1992, Bill Clinton touted his state's job growth and welfare-to-work initiatives as proof that he really would get the national economy moving again and end welfare as we know it. In 2000, George W. Bush bragged that his state's use of faith-based groups to deliver social services marked the kind of "compassionate conservatism" he would bring to Washington.

It's a good bet, then, that the 2008 presidential race will include more than a few governors. In fact, with no president and, in all likelihood, no vice president on the ticket—the first time that's happened in modern history—the campaign could be so crowded with statehouse chief executives it'll look like a meeting of the National Governors Association. The Republican primary might include Mitt Romney, Jeb Bush, George Pataki, and even (given a little constitutional rejiggering) Arnold Schwarzenegger. On the Democratic side, Bill Richardson, Ed Rendell, Mark Warner, Phil Bredesen, Kathleen Sebelius, and Tom Vilsack are just some of the governors who could jump into the race.

In such a crowded field, it'll be more important than ever for a would-be president to have a standout record of achievements—especially programs addressing the big national issues that will likely define the 2008 race. To that end, we've scoured the states to assemble our Top 10 List of good ideas that any Democratic (or enlightened Republican) governor could implement to build a White House-worthy résumé.

National security

Problem: Questions of war and peace might not dominate the 2008 elections to quite the extent they did in 2004. But any presidential candidate who completely lacks national security experience will face a major credibility gap with voters. That's the big disadvantage of running as a governor: Defending the country just isn't in their job description. The one exception is that governors oversee National Guard units, the area of the military that is having the hardest time recruiting new members now that extended tours of duty are part of the job. Grueling deployments aren't the only troubles Guard members face today. Upon coming home, 20 percent of them lack health-care coverage because their military health benefits end when their tours of duty are over. That's a lousy way to treat our troops. And with enlistment and reenlistment rates plummeting, it's also a national security risk.

Solution: Let guardsmen and their families buy into state employee health-care systems that provide discounted coverage.

Where it's been tried: Nowhere yet, though health experts see no major reason why it couldn't be done.

Campaign sound bite: Guard members face the same dangers as full-time soldiers; they deserve full-time health-care.

Possible downside: Some members of the Guard will still not be able to afford the coverage absent significant state subsidies, and rising health-care costs are already straining state budgets.

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Abortion

Problem: The majority of voters support abortion rights in some form. Yet pro-choice politicians have been knocked around on the abortion issue ever since the words "partial-birth" entered the political lexicon. They fight campaigns with their backs against the ropes, offering the single defense of "choice" against countless attacks over which abortion procedures they support, why parents shouldn't be notified when their teenagers seek abortions, and whether they believe fetuses can feel pain. A smart pro-choice governor needs a way to escape this defensive crouch while acknowledging the moral qualms that even many pro-choice voters have about abortion.

Solution: Change the debate from abortion rights to abortion prevention by sponsoring programs that reduce the number of abortions performed. The most effective way to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and hence abortions, is to increase the use of birth control. But contraception for women can be expensive, and unlike Viagra—which is subsidized by most insurance companies—coverage of birth control is arbitrary, subject to the whims of insurance companies and state Medicaid programs. California addressed this problem by expanding access to contraception through Medicaid waivers and by encouraging private insurance companies to cover birth control. In the first year of California's expanded program, more than 100,000 unintended pregnancies were prevented, avoiding 41,000 abortions and saving the state nearly $400 million.

Where it's been tried: California, Washington, among other states.

Campaign sound bite: In my state, we cut the number of abortions without undercutting a woman's right to choose.

Possible downside: Birth control is still a no-no for some Catholics.

Medical malpractice

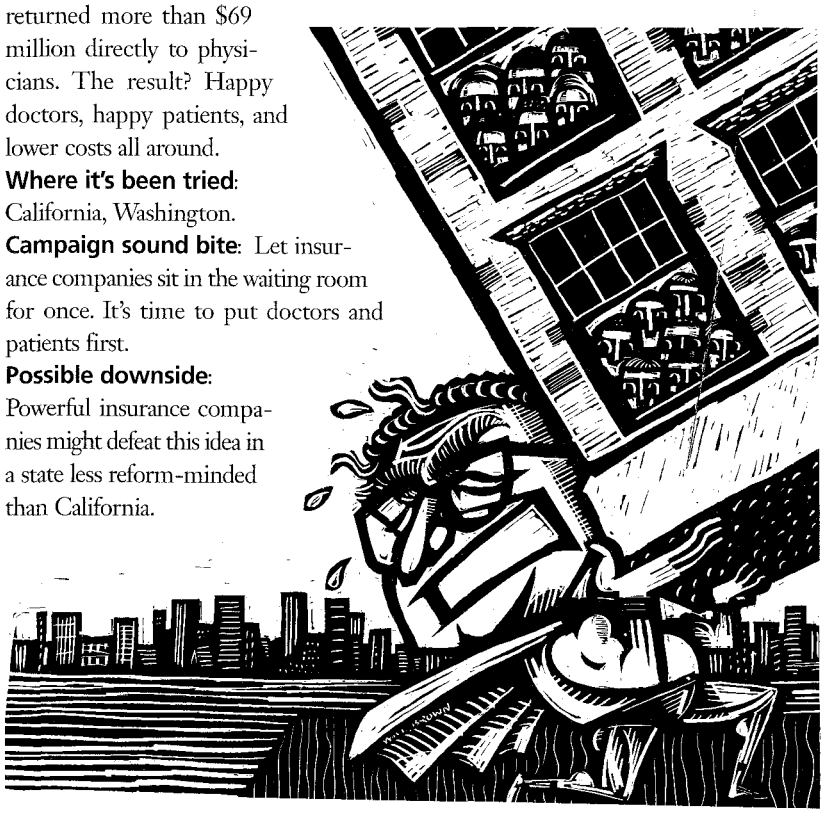
Problem: No doubt about it. George W. Bush and the GOP have elevated the once-obscure issue of "tort reform" to near-center stage. They've been helped by the fact that medical malpractice rates really are at record highs, and doctors are understandably apoplectic. But they have fingered the wrong villain. The real cause of high malpractice insurance rates hasn't been runaway juries (jury awards have actually declined over the last 30 years), but the industry's habit of hiking rates each time the economy fumbles and investment returns slide. Instead of taking money away from the most victimized patients by capping damage awards (the Republican go-to solution), a tough governor should take on the insurance industry.

Solution: Crack down on insurance companies that rip off physicians and, by extension, patients. In most states, the insurance commissioner is appointed by the governor and is often an industry-friendly sort. But there's nothing preventing a governor from picking an Eliot Spitzer-like figure instead (as in Washington State, where Commissioner Mike Kreidler has taken on insurance companies) or championing caps on insurance rates. The model for freezing malpractice insurance is in California, where voters approved an initiative that resulted in a rate freeze, a rate rollback, and regulation that reduced medical malpractice premiums. During the first three years of reform, premiums dropped more than 20 percent, and three of the state's largest medical malpractice insurance companies returned more than $69 million directly to physicians. The result? Happy doctors, happy patients, and lower costs all around.

Where it's been tried: California, Washington.

Campaign sound bite: Let insurance companies sit in the waiting room for once. It's time to put doctors and patients first.

Possible downside: Powerful insurance companies might defeat this idea in a state less reform-minded than California.



Education

Problem: Education is still near the top of most voters' priorities, but right now, neither party has a natural advantage on the issue. Democrats haven't come up with any new ideas in a while and have fallen back on their image as big-spenders who throw money at schools. Republicans originally benefited from the president's No Child Left Behind reforms. But their image has been tarnished by flaws in the testing law and by the GOP's failure to provide enough funds to make the law's reforms work. Governors are in a tough position; they can't change No Child Left Behind, and they can't unilaterally come up with enough money to radically reshape their states' educational systems.

Solution: Concentrate on doing a superior job of fulfilling the most important responsibility No Child Left Behind places on states: turning around failing schools. Under strong gubernatorial leadership, a few state education departments have recruited teams of first-rate teachers, administrators, counselors, and testing specialists to swoop in and take over schools (mostly in impoverished neighborhoods) whose students consistently perform at the bottom on state

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tests. These turn-around teams have managed to lift the performance of the vast majority of targeted schools, in some cases dramatically.

Where it's been tried: North Carolina, Kentucky.

Campaign sound bite: I turned around more failing schools in four years than any other governor in America.

Possible downside: Do voters care about poor kids' schools or *their* kids' schools?

Cultural decay

Problem: Pundits were abuzz about "moral values" after the election, declaring that the GOP's positions on gay marriage and abortion won them the support of culturally-concerned swing voters. But most Americans don't go home at night and worry about gay marriage—they have more practical concerns such as the environment in which their children are growing up. Parents feel they have little control over the influences to which their kids are exposed, including movies, music, and video games. While violent and sexually explicit video games carry warning labels, in most states, kids can buy and rent these games without parental approval.

Solution: Limit teen access to violent and explicit video games by requiring parental approval for purchase or rental.

Where it's been tried: Washington state passed such a law; Illinois is debating one.

Campaign sound bite: Parents, not the entertainment industry, ought to be able to control what video games their children play.

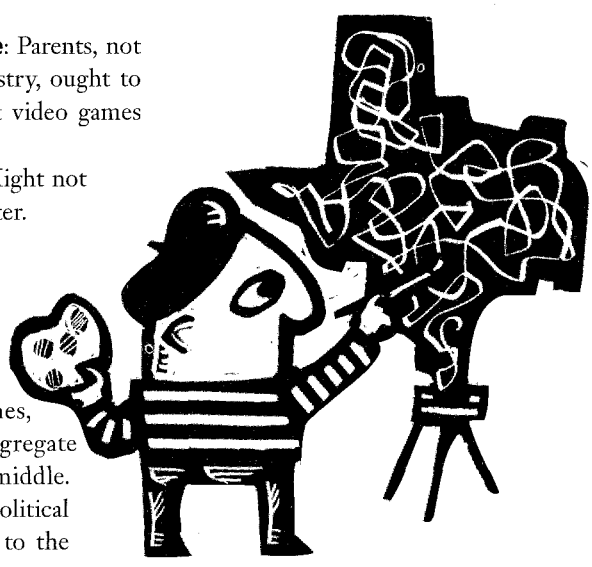
Possible drawback: Might not pass constitutional muster.

Partisanship

Problem: Even in these politicized times, most voters still congregate around the moderate middle. They hate the way the political system polarizes issues to the point where little constructive work gets done. And they don't appreciate it when politicians bend or rewrite the rules of governing to garner greater partisan advantage—something increasingly common in GOP-controlled Washington these days.

A major manifestation—and source —of the problem is the way lawmakers, with the aid of computerized voter- mapping software and permissive readings of electoral law, gerrymander congressional and legislative districts, creating awkward borders that seem drawn by Picasso. The result is that most elected representatives today occupy safe seats and don't need to reach out to swing voters or be seen as working with members of the other party. In fact, quite the opposite is true: To the extent that they're vulnerable at all, it's to primary challengers from their own party who are more ideologically extreme than they are. Thus, year after year, politics in America becomes more vicious, uncompromising, and undemocratic.

Solution: Take away from politicians and parties the corrupting power to draw legislative districts and give it to independent redistricting commissions. In states that have done so, commissions have redrawn lines using reasonable, nonpartisan guidelines like compactness, contiguity, and respect for existing city and other geographic boundaries. As a result, the majority of state and congressional seats in those states are competitive again, giving a fighting chance to moderates in both parties.



Where it's been tried: Arizona, Washington, Iowa.

Campaign sound bite: Let's make politics more like football: straight lines, fair rules, and a level playing field.

Possible downside: The other party could accuse the governor of trying to rewrite the rules of redistricting for his *own* party's advantage.

Charity

Problem: When it comes to supporting charitable organizations, Americans are not divided. More than three-quarters like the idea of strengthening community organizations—both religious and secular—that provide social services to those in need. Unfortunately, while the Bush administration's faith-based initiative has expanded the ability of these groups to apply for government grants, it has slashed the amount of funds available, reducing the overall amount of money that goes to social service organizations of any type. And the president punted on the part of his "compassionate conservative" agenda that would have done the most to increase private giving: a federal tax deduction for non-itemizers (i.e. most citizens) who make charitable donations. Currently, those who don't itemize get no federal tax breaks for such donations. That simple change would have resulted in an estimated $80 billion in extra donations to private charities. Instead, Bush shoved that promised reform aside in favor of such provisions as eliminating the estate tax.

Solution: Give non-itemizers a *state* tax deduction for their charitable contributions. Also, provide incentives for businesses to increase their donations to charities, and encourage farmers and other food manufacturers to donate surplus food by letting them write off those contributions.

Where it's been tried: Colorado, Minnesota.

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Campaign sound bite: Empowering citizens to help each other.
Possible downside: Costs money upfront in the form of tax deductions.

The time crunch

Problem: Arguably the biggest unmet need in America is for adjustments to compensate for one of the greatest demographic changes in the last 30 years: the rise of women in the workforce. Though the shift has brought huge economic and personal benefits to men and women alike, it's also meant that parents have less time to be with their families and less control over the time they do have. The anxiety parents feel is most keen when a child is born, an elderly parent falls ill, or a family member winds up in the hospital. Suddenly, the tight routines of daily life are thrown into disarray, and at least one parent has to take time off from work.

The Family and Medical Leave Act, which Bill Clinton signed into law in 1993, allows working parents to take unpaid leave of up to 12 weeks to care for a newborn or sick family member.

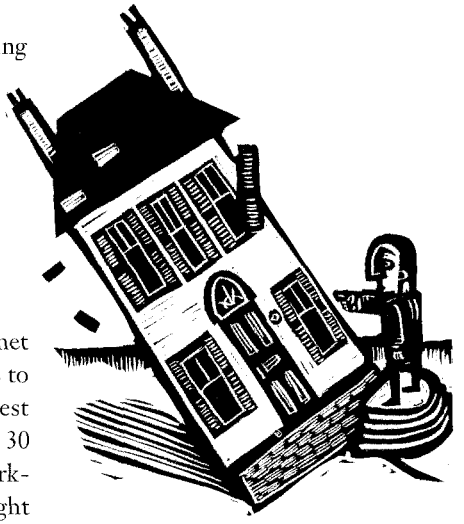
But families exercise that right at the steep price of losing income they otherwise would have earned. Millions of parents can't afford the income hit and end up trapped at their jobs during a time of family crisis.

Solution: Create a statewide, paid-family-leave insurance program run through the unemployment compensation system. Employees who agree to a small payroll deduction can take time off for family emergencies and collect 50 percent of their salaries.

Where it's been tried: Legislation is pending in Washington.

Campaign sound bite: Working parents shouldn't have to choose between doing their jobs and doing right by their families.

Possible downside: Another employer mandate, hence anathema to business groups.



"If you're living in it, your builder should stand behind it."

Homeownership

Problem: As David Brooks reminds everyone at least once a month, the new American migration is out to the exurbs, and the key to winning elections lies in attracting the support of these new exurban homeowners. These voters tend to be fiscally and socially conservative—and have unsurprisingly sided with Republicans over the last few election cycles. Sometimes, however, concerns close to home matter more to exurbanites than capital gains tax cuts and gay marriage bans. In the last decade, millions of Americans have found that their exurban dream homes—typically built by profit-hungry and largely-unregulated developers—are appallingly shoddy. Even new luxury McMansions have crumbling foundations and shingles that disintegrate after just a few years.

Solution: Enact a House Lemon Law that holds builders responsible for their mistakes and ensures that middle-class families don't spend $300,000 to live in the equivalent of a Pinto.

Where it's been tried: Texas, where a house lemon bill is stuck in the legislature.

Campaign sound bite: If you're living in it, your builder should stand behind it.

Possible downside: Tough getting such a bill through legislatures run by politicians who receive contributions from the homebuilding sector.

Conservation

Problem: Environmentalism has become one of the hottest cultural flashpoints in the battle between red and blue America. Metropolitan liberals believe, with almost religious fervor, that wildlife should be protected and land preserved. Rural and small-town conservatives believe, with equal passion, that environmentalists are elitists who want to separate people from nature and guns from their owners. Yet despite their philosophical and lifestyle differences, both groups value open space, and both are having a harder and harder time getting access to it. National and state parks have become gridlocked with visitors during peak season. And with developers turning rural land into parking lots, access to good trout streams and hunting woods on private land is declining rapidly.

Solution: Offer private landowners—many of them struggling farmers and ranchers—an annual fee in exchange for allowing others to hunt, fish, boat, bird watch, or picnic on their property. The money would come from small increases in fees for state hunting and fishing licenses and landfill "tipping fees." Landowners' participation is voluntary and renewable annually.

Where it's been tried: North and South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, among others.

Campaign sound bite: More land for hunters and hikers, more water for boaters and fisherman.

Possible downside: Sierra Club members might shudder to find common cause with deer-hunting associations. ◆

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How Should Liberals Think About Liberty?

Michael Lind and William A. Galston square off.

Michael Lind writes:

In his insightful and important essay "Taking Liberty" (*Washington Monthly*, April 2005), William Galston, one of contemporary America's leading social and political thinkers, is right to insist that liberty should be at the heart of American progressive politics. And he is right to caution against "a temptation by many, especially on the left," to redefine freedom to mean "economic fairness and social justice" with which "today's left is more comfortable. That temptation should be avoided. Because freedom has its own context and logic, we cannot make it mean whatever we like." In the American political tradition, if not in the French or Swedish, liberty is central, not equality or fraternity. Galston deserves credit for emphasizing that it is not enough for thinkers of the center-left to learn to "speak American"; they must learn to "think American" as well even if the kind of progressivism this produces does not necessarily resemble any European model. Given the disorientation of the center-left in the United States today, Galston's advice could not be wiser or more timely.

But we can accept his premise that liberty must be at the center of our understanding of the history of American reform and at the same time question the details. Many of the achievements that progressives in the United States today are trying to defend from the right or build upon can be defended by two different conceptions of liberty, which might be called individualist liberalism and republican liberalism. These map the same reality in different ways, like Euclidean geometry and Riemannian geometry.

Galston writes, "For much of the 20th century, progressives took the lead in both defining freedom and advancing its borders. Teddy Roosevelt expanded the 19th-century laissez-faire conception of freedom...to include the liberties of workers and entrepreneurs to get ahead in the world.... FDR further redefined the concept to include social protection from the ills of want and fear." This is the language of individualist liberalism, which is the predominant strain of center-left liberal thought today. Natural to individualist liberalism is the notion of progress as a gradual broadening of the conception of liberty, from civil rights to political rights and ultimately to social rights, to use the language of influential 20th-century British liberal thinker T. H. Marshall. While these rights are due to all citizens, no corresponding duty on the part of citizens is necessarily attached. In much center-left thought, social rights, like economic entitlements, are justified because they allow individuals to have more options to order their lives as they choose.

This tradition is particularly powerful in Britain. But while it began influencing American liberalism in the Progressive era, the individualist liberal tradition exists in tension with older American republican liberal ideas which are now found among more populists than self-identified progressives. The basic difference is this: Individualist liberals on the center-left are inclined to justify compulsory universal schooling, Social Security, and the military by redefining individual freedom, while republican liberals do not need to make that intellectual move. For republican liberals, freedom, narrowly defined in terms of civil and voting rights, is secured by a republican form of government, based on elections, checks and balances, the rule of law—and a competent and virtuous citizenry. In a republican liberal society, policies and institutions that strengthen the republican citizenry can be justified even if they do not increase the liberty of particular individuals or, in some cases, all individuals. The premise that republican government generally tends to protect liberty frees republican liberals from any need to justify particular policies that are good for the republic in terms of the freedom of particular individuals.

To illustrate the difference, let us look again at Galston's examples. "Teddy Roosevelt expanded the 19th-century laissez-faire conception of freedom, in which government was seen as the greatest threat, to include the liberties of workers and entrepreneurs to get ahead in the world, freedoms restricted by concentrations of economic power and protected by the exercise of public power." To a republican liberal, this is an oddly economistic and individualistic way to describe the great campaigns to regulate or break up the trusts, the purpose of which, from the republican liberal perspective, was not so much to maximize individual economic mobility as to reduce the threat to the institution of republican government posed by

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political corruption and an aristocracy of wealth.

A similar point can be made about another of Galston's examples: "FDR further redefined the concept to include social protection from the ills of want and fear." It is true that FDR sometimes sounded like T.H. Marshall, for whom social rights followed legal and political rights in a natural historic evolution—for example, when FDR spoke of an Economic Bill of Rights. However, on other occasions FDR spoke the language of republican liberalism, which holds that a republic requires citizens who have a high degree of economic independence from both the labor market and the state. For example, Roosevelt denounced tenant farming as a threat to the republic, using the classic language of American republican liberalism: "In our national life, public and private, the very nature of free government demands that there must be a line of defense held by the yeomanry of business and industry and agriculture. . . . Any elemental policy, economic or political, which tends to eliminate these dependable defenders of democratic institutions, and to concentrate control in the hands of a few, small, powerful groups, is directly opposed to the stability of government and to democratic government itself."

FDR shared this republican liberal language with Sen. Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, who asserted in 1826: "The freeholder is the natural supporter of a free government. . . . It should be the policy of republics to multiply their freeholders, as it is the policy of monarchies to multiply tenants. We are a republic, and we wish to remain so; then multiply the class of freeholders; pass the public lands cheaply and easily into the hands of the People; sell, for a reasonable price, to those who are able to pay; and give, without price, to those who are not." This reasoning culminated in the Homestead Act, signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862, which gave 160 acres of free land to any adult who would live on and improve it. One can say that Lincoln "redefined freedom" to include the right to free farmland. But why torture the word "freedom" until it confesses in this way? The Homestead Act did not necessarily make America more free, but it did make America more republican, something that promoted freedom indirectly, if it is indeed true that a republican society with a prosperous middle class is more likely to be immune to political tyranny and factional corruption.

Most of the policy goals of contemporary progressives can be justified in terms of their contribution to republican citizenship, which reinforces freedom; it is not necessary, therefore, to redefine freedom to promote those goals. Consider the case of adequate taxation. "It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system," George Washington wrote at the conclusion of the American Revolution, "that every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a free government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defense of it." Galston writes that "freedom is seldom without cost. It usually requires sacrifice." He quotes FDR in his 1941 State of the Union speech, calling for "personal sacrifice" in wartime. But while republican liberals have no trouble justifying the sacrifice of individual wealth, freedom, or even life in defense of the greater good of the republican citizenry, individualist liberals find it impossible to explain how someone who dies for his country is dying for his own liberty or well-being. This problem, which individualist liberalism of the modern center-left kind shares with libertarianism, is often evaded by borrowing the rhetoric of the quite different republican liberal tradition, which is brought in, as Galston brings in FDR's language, to patch a gaping hole that not even the most imaginative redefinition of personal freedom can cover.

Or consider public education. "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be," wrote Thomas Jefferson, stating the traditional republican liberal rationale. Galston proposes a quite different rationale, which once again requires a somewhat strained redefinition of liberty: "During the past three decades, young Americans with no more than a high school education have seen a steadily narrowing range of occupational choices. In that respect, they are less free than were their parents with the same level of schooling. This isn't just an economic growth issue (though it is), or a social justice issue (though it is that, too); it is at its core an issue of individual freedom." It is an indication of just how far center-left thought has drifted from the American republican liberal tradition that Galston can allude to three rationales—individual social mobility, economic growth, and social justice—without even mentioning what has been, for generations of Americans, the primary rationale for public education: the need to produce citizens of the republic with the intellectual competence to fulfill their civic duties as voters and jurors and, if need be, as soldiers.

As these examples suggest, when we try to justify many institutions that progressives favor in terms of the well-being of discrete individuals, rather than in terms of the institutional interest of the republic, then it is easy to be lost in intellectual contortions. Galston inadvertently illustrates this point when he writes, "As a motorist, I am rightly free to choose my own route and destination. But government correctly infers that I also wish to be protected from smashing into cars, and so restricts which side of the road others and I may drive on." As this suggests, individualist liberalism is tempted to justify government authority in terms of coordinated individual goods, rather than of a shared and inherently indivisible public good (*res publica* is Latin for "public thing" or "thing held in common"). By contrast, the concept of the public interest permits republican liberals to justify public education, policies promoting widespread economic independence, taxation, military or militia service, jury duty and voting, along with public health policies and environmental protection, without needing to show that these programs and institutions could be derived from separate, individual goods or that each individual citizen is likely to benefit.

To be sure, republican liberals in the American tradition are liberals first and republicans second; the unconvincing arguments of some American "civic republicans" to the contrary, Americans have never been intensely communal Spartans. My point is simply that treat-

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ing republicanism as a means, of which the safeguarding of personal liberty from political tyranny is the end, makes argument much simpler for those who oppose the radical anti-statism of many on the contemporary American right.

Galston is absolutely right that the ideal of liberty must be central to any progressive politics that can resonate with the American people. Fortunately, in order to justify many cherished progressive policies, from universal health care to a more egalitarian system of education, it is not necessary to redefine liberty. It is only necessary to show that progressive policies are calculated to strengthen the great safeguard of liberty, the American republic, or the great safeguard of the republic, a virtuous, educated, and secure citizenry. ◆

William A. Galston responds:

I have long deplored the fact that there seems to be so much more intellectual energy on the right than on the left. While conservatives have spent decades debating, and occasionally agreeing on, first principles, liberals have remained mired in the details of particular policies and programs. Many liberals believed (and some continue to believe) that at the level of basic political morality, the New Deal represented the permanent victory of moderate social democracy over market-based individualism. Because we took this triumph for granted, we lost the inclination, and then the capacity, to defend our political morality against principled assault. We exemplified the truth of John Stuart Mill's dictum that he who knows only his own side of the case does not even know that.

I wrote "Taking Liberty" as a modest contribution to changing this situation. It was my hope that thinkers uncomfortable with the current conservative hegemony would be moved to criticize my argument and put forth their own recommendations. Only that kind of engaged dialogue can jar somnolent progressives out of their hypertactical defensive crouch. Michael Lind's response, which pivots on a contrast between "individualist" and "republican" liberalism, is a model of what I hoped to evoke.

To identify what I think is the real issue between us, let me begin by clearing away some underbrush. Lind and I do not disagree, at least not fundamentally, about the nature of a free society. (Indeed, most Americans agree on this, regardless of other disputes.) A political community we deem free is not oppressed by external forces; its governing institutions are responsive to the people's will; its laws protect each individual from the arbitrary exercise of public power and from the depredations of other individuals; its economy permits individuals to work and innovate without asymmetries of wealth so large as to subject some people to the unchecked will of others; its society allows for the development and exercise of personal and group differences and teaches its members how to live together in peace, if not in harmony, despite these differences. Lind's critique clarifies the real subject of my piece—namely, individual rather than public liberty.

Nor do we disagree about the theory and practice of public liberty—republicanism, for short—as a means to securing individual liberty, or about a "virtuous, educated, and secure citizenry" as a foundation of sustainable republican institutions. On the contrary: I have long emphasized the duality of our Madisonian legacy. On the one hand is Madison's classic justification of constructing a Constitution with checks and balances and divided powers in Federalist 51: "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place." This was, he declared, "a policy of supplying by opposite and rival interests, the defect [that is, the weakness or absence] of better motives." On the other hand, Madison insisted just four essays later in Federalist 55, "As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. [Far from denying or denigrating these qualities,] Republican government presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form."

Along with most other Founding Fathers, Madison understood that education was indispensable if these more estimable qualities were to be nurtured into civic virtues. Liberals today should remember their Madison and take civic education seriously. A research institute I founded in 2001, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), does this; one of our reports, "The Civic Mission of Schools," has helped catalyze a new movement for civic education in states around the country.

Nor do Lind and I disagree about the importance of a sense of duty and responsibility as well as rights and liberties. To take only the most obvious point: The rule of law is at the heart of a decent free society. But no political system possesses enough carrots or sticks to induce its citizens to obey the law. Fear may induce obedience for a time, but in the long run, most citizens will obey the law most of the time only because they believe they have a responsibility to do so. This is even truer when civic activities are voluntary rather than mandatory. On the basis of rational self-interest alone, it is virtually impossible to explain why anybody takes the time and trouble to vote. For the most part, we vote because we think we should, or not at all.

To account for the presence of this belief, a good Aristotelian (which I am

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on alternate Tuesdays) would call attention to the importance of forming such habits when young; not only to civic education in schools, but also to the influences of family, law, and the everyday practices of the community. But while habit may help explain belief, it cannot justify it. Here is one point on which Lind and I may genuinely disagree. After noting my endorsement of FDR's call for personal sacrifice, especially during times of war, Lind contends that individualist liberals "find it impossible to explain how someone who dies for his country is dying for his own liberty or well-being." Perhaps so. But I cannot help noting that, in making this argument, Lind rejects in a single clause the classic liberal account of social obligations that stretches from John Locke to John Rawls.

According to the essentials of this tradition, individuals realize that they have goals they cannot hope to achieve on their own. To reduce violent conflict, which impedes the attainment of private aspirations (recall the Lebanese civil war), and to promote positive-sum cooperation in pursuit of those aspirations, individuals band together in political communities. The terms of association, whether explicit or implicit, ask all individuals to forego certain liberties of private action and judgment in the name of creating institutions and practices that benefit those same individuals, and invest those institutions with the legitimate power to punish the non-compliant. There can be no guarantee, of course, that every public act will benefit every individual. But that is not the right standard, any more than conventional contract law is invalidated by the fact that individuals often enter into enforceable agreements that they later have cause to regret. For individualist liberals, in short, many rights and duties arise through consent to a system that is seen as mutually advantageous, not always moment by moment, but in the long run.

It is not entirely obvious why Lind rejects this account, or what he seeks to put in its place. The crux of the matter seems to arise in his discussion of my traffic metaphor, during which he distinguishes between "coordinated individual goods," on which individualist liberals rely, and a "shared and inherently indivisible public good," which is the heart of the matter for republican liberals. At the threshold of the argument, note that coordination rather than indivisibility is by far the more natural and plausible explanation for traffic regulations. By extension, I do not take Lind to be denying that the need to coordinate individual goods justifies a substantial range of general and enforceable public norms. The real question, then, is whether this strategy of argument, despite its many successes, nonetheless fails to account for important public institutions and policies.

I am not now, nor have I ever been, an economist, let alone a neo-classical economist. Still, there is a sense in which the concept of an indivisible public good fits comfortably into that highly individualistic body of thought. As I understand it, such a good is indivisible in the sense that if it exists, all individuals within a particular sphere enjoy unimpeded, non-exclusionary access to it. When we walk outdoors, the air we breathe is either clean or polluted. The air quality provided to each individual is the same for all individuals. But it does not follow from the bare fact of indivisibility that only some individuals benefit from clean air.

Nor, it seems to me, do we need Lind's thesis to justify vital institutions such as public education. Public education fosters two kinds of goods. First, if the system is working as it should, every child benefits (that is, after all, the moral force of "No Child Left Behind"). In addition, public education done correctly generates positive externalities that benefit the rest of us. A better-educated workforce means more taxpayers to help bear the costs of a civilized society. More civic-minded cohorts of high school and college graduates mean that the rest of us spend less on systems of legal oversight, enforcement, and punishment. And so forth.

The heart of our difference probably comes out best in Lind's discussion of FDR and Thomas Hart Benton. What they had in common (at least during Roosevelt's republican liberal moments) was a belief in the "yeoman" or "freeholder" as a key guarantor of self-government. This thinking, Lind suggests, undergirded the Homestead Act, signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1862: This act "did not necessarily make America more free, but it did make America more republican."

To this, two responses. First, I do not agree that saying that the Homestead Act made America freer involves any torture of the word "freedom." At the very least, the tidal wave of American families who enjoyed its benefits won a substantial increment of freedom. Second, it is hard for me to see how FDR intended Social Security to generate more freeholders. Just the reverse: He carried the day with the argument that, by itself, individual ownership in a dynamic market society did not suffice to guarantee all citizens freedom from want and fear in their old age, let alone the freedom to live apart from their children if they chose. Only collective provision could get the job done. Republican liberalism may have been an episodic feature of Roosevelt's rhetoric, but it was hardly the long pole in the New Deal policy tent.

Not surprisingly, it is the opponents rather than the supporters of Social Security who invoke the image of sturdy, independent yeomen today, just as they did 70 years ago. The rhetoric of the "ownership society" is meant to suggest that Social Security as currently configured somehow renders us less free than we would be if we all relied instead on individual retirement accounts. The alleged opposition between individual freedom and collective provision is a thesis that liberals of all stripes, republican as well as liberal, must reject. My fear is that the language of republicanism inherently looks backward to a system of economic provision and social class structure that is gone for good and that applying it to the economic and social problems of the present will often lead to damaging results. Despite his manifestly thoughtful and well-intentioned contribution, I am not yet persuaded that Lind avoids that trap. ◆

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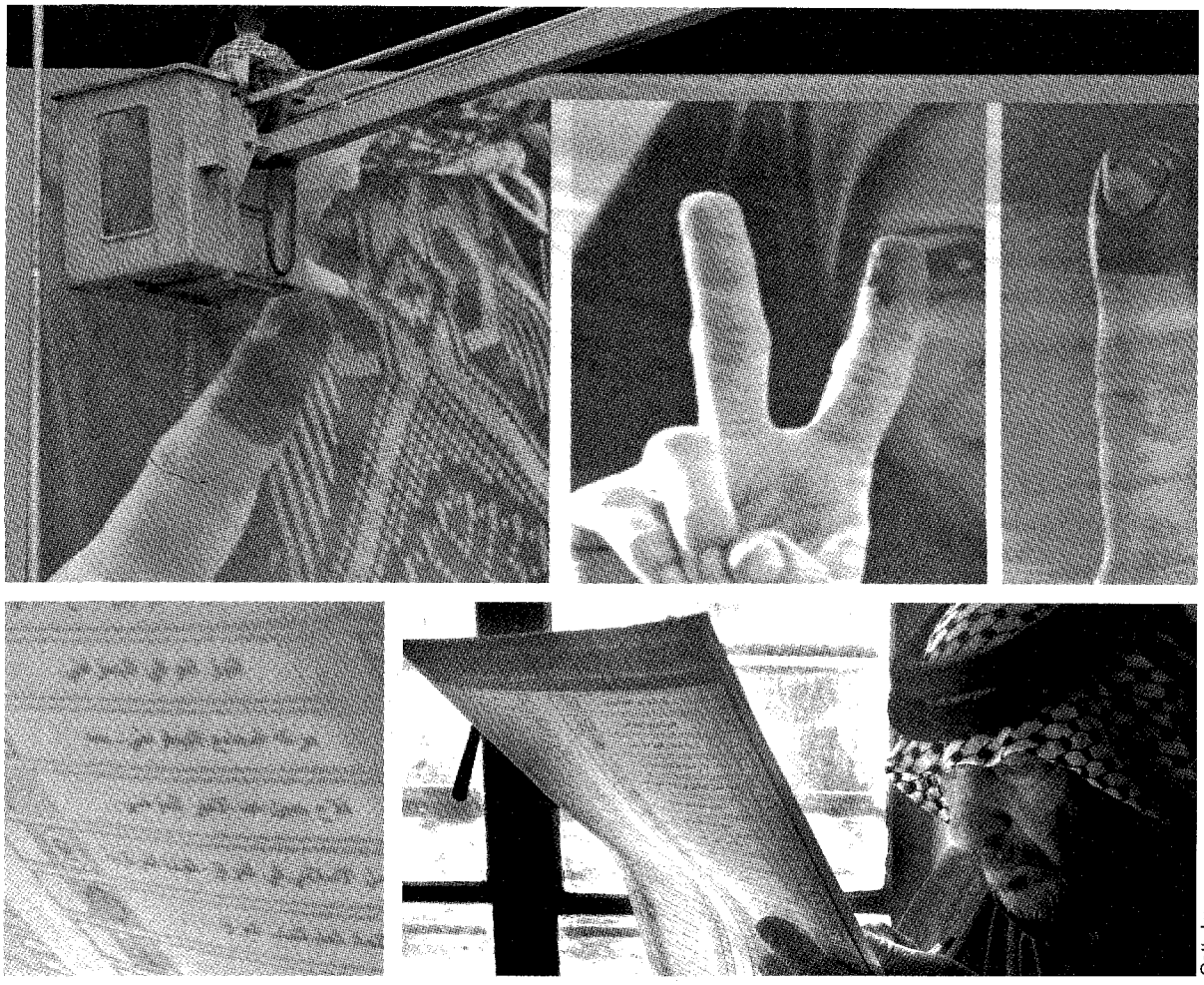
Middle East Democracy:

Who gets the credit? What are the lessons?



Getty Images.

Joseph Biden: *Credit Bush's rhetoric, not his actions*
Wesley Clark: *War didn't, and doesn't, bring democracy*
Jonathan Clarke: *Credit, deserved or not, goes to the winner*
Nikolas Gvosdev: *War was a catalyst, but for what?*
Heather Hurlburt: *Everything but war made the difference*
Nancy Soderberg: *Turns out diplomacy works*
Michael Tomasky: *Praise the message, blame the messenger*

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Credit Bush's rhetoric, not his actions

By Sen. Joseph Biden

In speaking about the Middle East, President Bush recently said "a critical mass of events is taking that region in a hopeful new direction." For the Middle East, historically bereft of democracy and clotted with autocrats and despots, the promise of a better life is raising expectations across the region.

Some Democrats, after nearly a century of efforts to inject the ennobling quality of universal freedom and human rights into the heart of our foreign policy agenda, seem uneasy about this president's recent focus on the idea. President Bush spoke with great eloquence in his second inaugural address about expanding freedom, and I was a little frustrated by the reception it received from some of my Democratic colleagues and friends around the world. The headline from the leading Green newspaper in Germany was "Bush Threatens More Freedom." Democrats at home were more circumspect, but for many, it seems that distaste for the messenger obscured the truth of the message.

If ever there was a time that proved that "good policy makes good politics"—and that politics makes strange bedfellows—today's global program to advance the cause of liberal democracy surely must be it.

What events are creating this critical mass the president is talking about? There's January's free elections in Iraq and Palestine, March's free municipal elections in Saudi Arabia, Egyptian President Mubarak's commitment to allow competitive elections for president, and the Lebanese people's demands for Syrian withdrawal and for free parliamentary elections.

I believe an enlightened American foreign policy, along with a little luck and a lot of perseverance, can help ensure that these developments will be remembered as seminal moments in a historic chain of events leading to a new era in the region. But it's important not just politically, but also for the sake of sound policy, for us to remember accurately and honestly what happened and why.

If we have reached a true tipping point, it seems to have been generated by recent events that had little or nothing to do with the Iraqi invasion: Arafat's death, the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, terror attacks in Saudi Arabia, and the increasingly vocal protests in Egypt. And in Iraq, while it cannot be denied that the invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein was a necessary precondition, it was Ayatollah Sistani who insisted on early elections against the wishes of the White House. President Bush decided to accede to Sistani's wishes and deserves kudos for showing firmness in sticking to the schedule.

Pro-democracy movements were underway throughout the Middle East before the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon directed America's attention to the region's political developments. Bahrain, Turkey, Iran, and Jordan all saw different forms of democratic progress. No doubt, the elections in Afghanistan and Iraq have contributed enormously to the increasingly optimistic pro-democratic mood.

At the same time, other repercussions of our unilateral invasion and occupation may have had the opposite effect. The level of anti-American sentiment in the Middle East has skyrocketed, and a new generation of terrorists has been trained in the art of guerrilla warfare on the streets of Iraq. We may still succeed in Iraq; indeed, I believe we must. But our mishandling of the Iraq occupation has also allowed autocrats in the region to use the post-Saddam chaos as justification for denying their people more freedom. They say, "With us, life is stable and predictable. Without us, we will reap the whirlwind. Without us, radical fundamentalists will take our place."

The president's focus on expanding freedom and his clear rhetoric do make a difference. They help embolden moderates and modernizers and lift the fear of reprisals. Providing that kind of space is critical to progress. Still, there is a significant gap between the president's rhetoric and his policies. This dichotomy risks undermining the credibility we're trying to restore with modernizers throughout the Middle East. While the administration talks tough to dictatorial adversaries like Iran and North Korea, it rarely sustains the heat on illiberal partners like China, Russia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. After all, we need China to help roll back North Korea's nuclear program. We need Russia's help to assure the destruction of those loose nuclear weapons that could fall into the hands of the wrong people, and to prevent Iran from going fully nuclear. We need Pakistan's help to root out al Qaeda and the remainder of the Taliban. We need Egypt's help on the Mideast peace process and in Iraq.

So, here's the problem: The president's very strength—the absolutism of his rhetoric—creates a very mixed message when it runs into the reality of our short-term security interests. It would help if the president acknowledged and explained that tension to the American people and others around the world.

Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) is now serving in his 6th term and is on the Foreign Relations Committee.

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Promoting democracy is tough sledding. We must go beyond rhetorical support and the passion of a single speech. It's one thing to topple a tyrant; it's another to put something better in his place.

The most effective, sustainable way to advocate democracy is to help those moderates and modernizers on the inside build democratic institutions such as political parties, an independent judiciary, a free media, a modern education system, a civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and a private sector.

When elections are held without mature institutions of this kind, they tend to favor the most organized groups in those societies, which also tend to be the most radical. To put it another way, freedom and liberal democracy are not synonymous. The former without the latter is a recipe for chaos and the return to autocratic rule.

The Bush administration does not appear to get the distinction. And if it does, it's not acting on it yet. Just follow the money. In next year's budget, the administration has requested $120 million for the Middle East Partnership Initiative—the signature democratic promotional front for the region—$30 million less than last year. It makes the same request it did last year for the National Endowment for Democracy, which has had great success in building political parties and NGOs, and in monitoring elections. It zeroes out regional democratic funds for North Africa and Asia. And the administration continues to channel most of its economic funds to our illiberal friends through their central governments instead of directly to independent actors.

We should be providing more of our money directly to NGOs to help train the journalists, judges, and political organizations that form the building blocks of a democratic society, rather than merely funding the autocratic governments that feel threatened by them. We should be building schools to compete with the madrassas, not giving open-ended assistance to the governments that use it to pay their bureaucrats' salaries. Two years ago, I proposed the establishment of a private, non-profit Middle East Foundation. It would provide grants to those in the region working to promote a vibrant civil society, an independent media, political parties, the rule of law, modern education systems, human rights including women's rights, and the private sector. The administration has embraced the idea and, with a little luck, it will become law this spring. But will we fund it?

Finally, combating poverty in failed states is as important as anything else in the quest to expand political freedom and change the conditions that breed extremism. Developmental assistance, debt relief, and education reform all must be part of our arsenal. Freedom from fear and freedom from want are flip sides of the democratic coin.

History is on democracy's side. In 1775, there was not a single democracy in the world. After our revolution there was one. Now, there are 119 electoral democracies; 62 percent of the world's governments. And, as the number of democracies increases still further, pressure will mount on the tyrannical outliers. We may be witnessing this very phenomenon as we speak today. Whatever obstacles lie ahead—and they are considerable—surely this historic shift should be enough to lift the hopes of Americans across the political spectrum, regardless of which party holds the White House. ◆

War didn't, and doesn't, bring democracy

By Gen. Wesley Clark

Operating on the theory that if you say something enough times people will believe it, the Bush administration and its allies have in the last few years confidently put forth an array of assertions, predictions, and rationalizations about Iraq that have turned out to be nonsense. They've told us that Saddam's regime was on the verge of building nuclear weapons; that it had operational links with al Qaeda; that our allies would support our invasion if we stuck with our insistence about going it alone; that we could safely invade with a relatively small number of ground troops; that the Iraqi people would greet us as liberators; that Ahmed Chalabi could be trusted; that Iraq's oil revenues would pay for the country's reconstruction; and that most of our troops would be out of Iraq within six months of the initial invasion.

Now, they tell us that recent stirrings of democracy elsewhere in the Middle East are a direct consequence of our invasion of Iraq, that the neoconservative vision of contagious democracy has been realized. Given the administration's track record, we would be wise to greet this latest assertion with suspicion.

It's understandable that the administration would

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want to make this claim. After all, by any honest accounting, the Iraq operation has been a mess. The U.S. military has performed brilliantly for the most part. But we invaded the country for the express purpose of removing weapons of mass destruction that turned out not to exist. That effort has cost $200 billion and more than 1,500 American lives. It has strained our alliances, damaged America's reputation in the world, pushed the all-volunteer military to the breaking point, and left our troops exposed in a hostile country with an open-ended exit strategy. It would be convenient to be able to say that the intent all along was just to bring democracy to the region and that this was simply the necessary price.

Convenient, but not true.

Certainly, the sight of Iraqis voting on January 30 was welcome, and a tremendous credit to the U.S. military efforts to provide security (though it was the Iraqis themselves who were most determined to hold the elections then, rather than delay the vote). The image of those purple Iraqi fingers was a powerful reminder that democracy knows no ethnic, religious, or geographic boundaries, and that freedom-loving hearts beat just as soundly under Arab robes as they do under grey suits.

At the same time, the demonstration effect of those elections has to be weighed against the immense damage our invasion has done in the region. Intensification of anti-Americanism and the ability of regional leaders to point to the chaos in Iraq as a reason to maintain the stability of current regimes are just some of the negative consequences of our invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Anyone who has traveled regularly to the Middle East over the years, as I have, knows that the recent hopeful democratic moves in Lebanon, Egypt, and the Palestinian territories have causal roots that long predate our arrival in Iraq, or that are otherwise unconnected to the war. American groups like the National Endowment for Democracy and numerous international organizations have been working with and strengthening reform-minded elements in these countries for years, and to some extent we are now seeing the fruits of that quiet involvement. But it is a mistake to believe that everything that is happening in the region—whether positive or negative—is a result of American military actions or rhetoric from Washington.

In Iran, for instance, the hopeful movement toward democracy went into remission after we invaded neighboring Iraq. Did our invasion cause democratic reform to falter in Iran? Not necessarily. There are many reasons—most of them internal—for why reform movements within a country wax and wane. But it is hard to claim that the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq was responsible for pro-democratic reactions in some Middle Eastern countries, but not for anti-democratic reactions in others.

Each of the positive developments that are currently bringing hope to the Middle East was more directly the result of a catalyzing local event than the consequence of American foreign policy. The death of Yasser Arafat made possible the democratic breakthrough within the Palestinian Authority and the progress we're now seeing between the PA and Israel. In Lebanon, it took the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri and the outrage, both internal and international, that followed to spur Syrian withdrawal. And across the region, leaders like Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak have recognized the need to seek greater legitimacy by opening the door for democracy in order to stave off mounting threats from Islamic fundamentalists.

Each of the positive developments that are currently bringing hope to the Middle East was more directly the result of a catalyzing local event than the consequence of any American foreign policy.

The administration has generally responded to these openings by adding to the pressure, calling for withdrawal of Syrian forces and for democracy. But like the rooster who thinks his crowing caused the dawn, those who rule Washington today have a habit of taking credit for events of which they were in fact not the primary movers. Many of them have insisted, for instance, that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was largely the consequence of President Reagan's military policies. As a military officer at the time, and a Reagan supporter, I would be happy to give the Gipper that credit. In truth, however, our military posture was only one factor. As in the Middle East today, individuals who labored for freedom within these countries performed the bulk of the work. Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel, and other contemporaries looked at America as an ideal, not as the muscle, on every street corner. Other, truly transformative agents of Western influence, such as Pope John Paul II, the labor union movement, international commercial institutions, and the influences of next-door neighbors like the Federal Republic of Germany were at work.

Today, American democratic values are admired in the Middle East, but our policies have generated popular resentment. Although it may come as a surprise to those of us here, there is a passionate resistance to the U.S. "imposing" its style of democracy to suit American purposes. Democratic reformers in the Middle East

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don't want to have their own hopes and dreams subordinated to the political agenda of the United States. It's for this reason that the administration shouldn't try to take too much credit for the coming changes. Or be too boastful about our own institutions. Or too loud in proclaiming that we're thrilled about Middle Eastern democracy—mostly because it makes us feel safer. A little humility is likely to prove far more useful than chest-thumping.

As we work to help establish the conditions for democracy in Iraq, our most useful role elsewhere is surely behind the scenes. For example, the situation in Lebanon creates a power vacuum which could lead to the same kind of instability that ignited civil war there 30 years ago. We can, and should, be working diplomatically to provide the support, balance, and reassurances necessary for the revival of independent democracy in Lebanon. We should engage Syria to encourage cooperation in Iraq and liberalize its politics at home. At the very least, we should be helping to craft what comes next before we tighten the noose further on an already-shaky Assad. In our eagerness to help, we'd do well to heed the motto of my Navy friends in the submarine service: "Run silent-run deep."

Democracy can't be imposed—it has to be home-grown. In the Middle East, democracy has begun to capture the imagination of the people. For Washington to take credit is not only to disparage courageous leaders throughout the region, but also to undercut their influence at the time it most needs to be augmented. Let's give credit where credit is due—and leave the political spin at the water's edge. ◆

Credit, deserved or not, goes to the winner

By Jonathan Clarke

It would be unwise to assume that recent and apparently promising developments in the Middle East are the intended consequences of the administration's policies or that they permanently enhance U.S. interests. Take, for example, the issue of the Iraqi elections, whose relatively successful holding and claimed cascading effects around the region have provided the background for much of today's sense of satisfaction. Those elections took place not because the Coalition Provisional Authority wanted them—the CPA favored a markedly different system of caucuses—but at the insistence of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who sensed the opportunity to advance his sectarian interests and found an ally within the Kurdish parties with similar interests of their own.

In many ways, the pattern emerging in Iraq closely resembles that in Bosnia where, in election after election, the various groups—Serbs, Croats, and Muslims have each failed to move beyond voting their ethnicity and where, 10 years after the Dayton agreement ended the Bosnian war, an externally-appointed High Representative still exercises ultimate control. Of course, Iraq may or may not fare as Bosnia has, but our experience in that part of the Balkans does provide a warning of the difficulties in creating a national identity and a firmly rooted democracy.

However, let us posit, for the purposes of argument, that the following political consensus emerges: The Iraq experience demonstrates that the exercise of raw American power in a war of choice can not only unseat an unpleasant villain but also provide a region-wide catalyst for a movement toward American-style market democracy in a region thought inhospitable to the democratic impulse. If this turns out to be the dominant analysis, present and past critics will be awkwardly placed, finding themselves in a similar position to those who went to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s and returned saying that "I have seen the future and it works." In short, those of us who had opposed the invasion of Iraq will feel like chumps, though we will rightly remind ourselves that the debate over whether to bomb Baghdad was always about means, not ends.

The political implications would be far-reaching if the left were again perceived to have been on the wrong side of an age-defining national security debate, as happened somewhat in defiance of the factual record over the Cold War. This perception might unleash a realignment on the left, perhaps producing a latter-day version of Scoop Jackson, the senator from Washington who, in the 1970s, rallied opinion within the Democratic Party against what he regarded as softness on the Soviet Union and America-hating over Vietnam. Jackson was one of

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the catalysts of today's neoconservative movement. This example might repeat itself, with a new generation of disillusioned Democrats defecting to Republican ranks or modes of thought. Advocates of "soft power" and multilateralism would have to slog uphill. Within the right, the implications would also be significant, sounding the final exit from influence of the Cold War's stability-minded, interest-based realists associated with President George H. W. Bush. On foreign policy, the now-dominant Republican, pro-democracy interventionists may make common cause with their like-minded Democratic counterparts (of whom there are surprisingly large numbers, starting with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright) to form a new consensus between neoliberals and neoconservatives, based around explicit use of American power, including the military option, to assert American values.

While the administration hopes that Iraq serves as the incubator of Islamic Jeffersons, it is just as possible that they will get a series of Fidels and Ches.

Instead of a gradualist, evolution-encouraging approach based on a wide international consensus, the United States might return to a more unilateralist, more revolutionary model not unlike that of the "rollback" days of former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and of the "best and brightest" technocrats whose anticommunist idealism led to the Vietnam War. Around the world, governments who fall short of our values might worry that they could become targets for activist regime change. Those quaking might include not only despots ruling regimes in the Middle East, but also closer-to-home America-taunting nuisances such as Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. The "Anglosphere" way of doing things would gain in prestige, thus strengthening the hand of, for example, Paul Wolfowitz at the World Bank to emphasize the link between poverty and lack of democracy. Empire—albeit dressed in some alluring disguise to do with "good governance"—would be back in business.

Whether any of this comes about lies in the laps of the gods. In May 2003, we went through the temporary exhilaration of "Mission Accomplished" only to plunge almost immediately into two of the most disastrous years in recent American foreign endeavors, as the administration's failure to prepare for administering Iraq became manifest. The ensuing chaos also demonstrated fairly conclusively that the connection between the administration's policies in Iraq and its actual outcome is one of coincidence rather than intelligent design. In the broader Middle East, there is still a severe risk that the "power to the people" bug introduced by the Iraq intervention will turn the region into a rerun of 1920s Germany, where the seeds of World War II began to incubate, rather than of Eastern Europe in the 1990s. The Saudi rulers, for example, make no secret of their concern that large numbers of their citizens are now receiving a free and highly-practical education in revolutionary insurgency in Iraq. While the administration hopes that Iraq serves as the incubator of Islamic Jeffersons, it is just as possible that they will get a series of Fidels and Ches.

The administration's approach to Iraq has thus far displayed notable intellectual affinities to the Catholic Church's liberation theology in 1970s Latin America, particularly in its use of ideology to challenge entrenched incumbents. At that time, of course, the United States was on the other side of the debate, and foreign policy makers in Washington were hugely pleased when Pope John Paul II put an abrupt stop to the uppity priests who were trying to promote popular anti-regime *pronunciamentos*. In Iraq and throughout the wider Middle East, the whirlwind is still there to be reaped, in Iraq perhaps by the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and his Mahdi army and elsewhere by other virulent anti-American forces.

Fortunately, there are signs that the administration realizes this. Although it is not above allowing its lighter-headed advocates to indulge in rhetorical backfilling, wholesale rewriting of history and the drawing of credulity-straining connections (Iraq, the Palestinians, Lebanon, Syria, Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan; Libya was once on the list but now we are not so sure), top-decision-makers act, for purposes of practical policy, as if they know all this is hogwash. Recently, top decision-makers have adopted a much more measured tone, one that is more in line with classic realism than with neo-conservative aspirationalism. Many of the more passionate advocates of our policies in Iraq are being moved to less influential positions. The president's recent renewed outreach to our allies, together with the efforts of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, have been genuinely effective in producing a more constructive international climate. This more pragmatic approach, if maintained, should provide the best platform for a non-disastrous outcome in the Middle East. It will be a major irony—and a gross indictment of Democratic political fecklessness—if, by repudiating the very policies that were leading to disaster, the administration gets to claim that those policies were right all along. But history and politics are full or ironies. It might just happen. ◆

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War was a catalyst, but for what?

By Nikolas Gvosdev

Give President Bush credit where it's due: Iraq's January 30th elections could not have taken place without the U.S. military intervention. Filipino-style "people power" would not have brought down Saddam Hussein. Despite decades of wars and sanctions, Hussein was in no danger of being overthrown from within.

And make no mistake, there is a genuine ferment in the region. Images of Iraqis, Palestinians, and Afghans casting ballots, not to mention the "flower revolutions" in the republics of the former Soviet Union that toppled corrupt authoritarian regimes, have been beamed into millions of homes by Al-Jazeera and the other Arab satellite channels—an ironic twist, given how often these networks have been vilified in Washington as little more than propaganda mouthpieces for Hussein and Osama bin Laden. All of this change has gotten people thinking—if Georgians, Ukrainians, and Kyrgyz can press for democracies, why can't Lebanese and Egyptians?

The problem is that, while cheering crowds make for good television footage, they are no substitute for the long, hard work needed to build the institutions that create and sustain a genuine democracy. Elections are only a starting point.

January 30 was indeed a historic day for Iraqis, but election day will lose its luster if Iraqis fail to see real improvement in their quality of life—their physical safety, in their job opportunities, and in the renovation of the country's infrastructure. Given the difficulties Iraq's assembly has faced in merely forming a provisional government—an easy task compared to the formidable task of reconstructing Iraq itself—the signs are not encouraging.

In recent months, we have begun to treat democracy promotion as a game of coloring in countries on the map—and in which we proclaim victory after a single election is held. Rarely do we return to observe the democratic trajectory after the cameras and NGOs have moved on to the next country.

Remember Serbia's revolution back in 2000—the one that dumped Slobodan Milosevic and became the prototype for subsequent movements elsewhere in eastern Europe? Popular enthusiasm soon turned to disenchantment as promises about reform and development failed to generate prosperity. Of course, Western declarations of support far outpaced the concrete assistance that actually arrived. Moreover, Serbia's democratic politicians were caught between meeting the needs of their constituents and satisfying unpopular demands from the United States (notably about extradition of persons wanted by the Hague tribunal). As a result, the fruits of that revolution were nearly lost in 2004 in a presidential race that attracted little attention in Washington; only by the slimmest of margins did a pro-democratic candidate (and therefore democracy itself) squeak to victory.

The lesson from Serbia's experience is clear: Democracy can thrive only when people have confidence that the new institutions not only represent their interests but also are able to improve the quality of their lives.

So the invasion of Iraq—necessary as it was for Hussein's removal—does not by itself create democratic capacity in the Middle East. And Congress, which has energetically funded the military mission, has shown markedly less enthusiasm for peacetime programs or for extending the sort of economic benefits that help engender the middle class upon which solid democracies are constructed. We applaud the progress that a country like Mali has made—one of the few genuine democracies in the Muslim world—and then our trade policies help trap the country's farmers upon whom that democracy rests, in poverty. (And such poverty creates the conditions that radical groups like al Qaeda are anxious to exploit.)

We forget that, in the end, democracy must appeal to people's interests, not just their aspirations. Many in Washington prefer to reverse that equation, believing that shared values produce common interests. This leads to all sorts of unrealistic assumptions about democratic states in the Middle East enthusiastically embracing the American agenda.

Let's assume that the most optimistic scenario is realized—that within five years most Middle Eastern states will be either constitutional monarchies or full-fledged democracies. Does this necessarily advance America's interests in the region?

After all, public opinion in both Egypt and Jordan remains overwhelmingly anti-Israel, calling into question whether democracies in either country would continue to maintain ties with Jerusalem. Democratic activists in Iran are no less fervent than the most reactionary mullahs in their support for their country's right to have a nuclear program. And there is no indication that Iraqi gratitude for liberation from Saddam Hussein will translate into close ties between Baghdad and Jerusalem anytime soon—the optimistic predictions of some American officials notwithstanding.

So even if Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia all become sustainable liberal democracies, there is no guarantee that

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these new governments will see eye-to-eye with the United States. Shared democracy is no guarantee of common action. After all, the famed "coalition of the willing" assembled to topple Saddam Hussein included authoritarian dictatorships such as Azerbaijan, Eritrea, and Uzbekistan as well as established democracies such as the United Kingdom and Australia. At the same time, many of the world's leading democracies, such as France, Germany, New Zealand, and India—not to mention emerging democracies in America's own backyard such as Mexico and Chile—opposed U.S. actions. Whether a country was democratic had no bearing on its decision whether to join forces with the United States against Saddam Hussein.

Realists who point out these unpleasant facts are invariably accused of having a secret penchant for tyrants. Not so—democracies have been consistently more reliable allies for the United States. But what brings states together are shared interests, not similar forms of governance.

An unintended—and unwelcome—consequence of recent developments may be a series of anti-American democracies emerging in the Middle East. The United States is not doing enough to build constituencies in the Arab world that are invested in the success of America's agenda for the region. This is not an argument for supporting tyrannies, but it is a reminder that, if more true democracies do emerge in the Arab and Islamic world, the United States will not be able to rely on military men and monarchs to circumvent the popular will.

Developments in Turkey should give us pause. For decades, the Turkish military—strongly pro-American and favorably disposed toward Israel—kept a close watch on the country's civilian leadership, even deposing governments from time to time, most recently in 1997, whenever the officer corps felt that Turkey's close ties with Washington were under threat. The rise of a moderate Islamic, pro-reform government under the aegis of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002 was initially lauded as a victory for democracy and heralded as an example for the rest of the Islamic world.

But, over time, disenchantment with Turkey's democrats has set in. The government's refusal to allow the United States to open a "northern front" in the Iraq war in 2003, the cooling of its strategic partnership with Israel, its rapprochement with Russia—all of this now has some American officials longing for the good old days when the generals would step in to set things right.

So, the United States faces a trade-off. The spread of democracy can indeed serve as a "safety valve" to lessen the appeal of extremism and terrorism—a desirable outcome from the American perspective—but it might also facilitate the rise of governments more inclined to disagree with American policy. When faced with this choice in the past, Washington chose a pliant but authoritarian Pakistan in preference to a democratic India to further U.S. goals in Southwest Asia.

Middle East democracies will become close U.S. allies only if we are prepared to build up significant equities in the relationship. This is why debating the extent to which the U.S. invasion of Iraq has forged a democratic opening in the Middle East is the wrong discussion—the more relevant question is how the United States will respond to changing circumstances. And so far, we seem woefully unprepared. ◆

Everything but war made the difference

By Heather Hurlburt

If President Bush is right about the way to build democracy in the Middle East—to eject forcibly a bad government, install a formally democratic replacement, and let the spillover begin—then we know where we should look for democracy's greatest triumphs over the last two decades:

Cambodia, where the United States supported Japan, Australia, and the United Nations in a massive post-conflict exercise in free elections and democracy-building. We would expect spillover to Cambodia's unfree neighbors Vietnam and Laos;

Bosnia and Kosovo, where conflicts were followed by free elections and newly-democratic structures of governance, overseen by U.S. soldiers and international funding at much higher per capita rates than in Iraq. Popular democracies there should have spread calm to troubled neighbors Serbia and Macedonia;

Liberia, which by now should be exporting high-

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quality democracy to Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Cote d'Ivoire; and the all-time champion,

Haiti, where, after U.S.-led interventions under both Presidents Clinton and Bush, waves of Haitian democracy should be lapping at the shores of Cuba by now.

If President Bush is right about the best way to promote democracy in the Middle East, then you'd expect the signal triumphs of democratization in the last 20 years to be clustered around other places where bad governments were replaced through international force.

Indeed, good-faith efforts were made to build democracy in all those places. The results, though, are mixed at best.

What has been missing from most post-conflict situations is time and trust. Time for domestic coalitions to organize, shake themselves up, prove they can recover from setbacks, and develop the expertise necessary to govern a country successfully and democratically. Trust among reformers, but also among citizens, that an arrangement as fluid as democracy can successfully protect them from danger—often their fellow-citizens.

Democracy comes after years of determined domestic opposition and international support have worn down or modified authoritarian regimes. Think Chile, South Africa, South Korea, Ghana, Mali, and Benin.

Major steps in democracy's march since the end of the Cold War have come when indigenous activists have had the time, and the trust of citizens, to build up the networks and expertise that make them savvy campaigners and credible alternative rulers.

Democracy comes dropping slowly, after years of determined domestic opposition and international support have worn down or modified authoritarian regimes. Think South Africa, South Korea, Chile, Ghana, Mali, and Benin.

Or democracy seems to come quickly, even opportunistically, after the death of a leader, an external event, or a sham election provides domestic activists the spark they need to engage the masses. Think Central Europe in 1989, but also the 2002 rejection of President Moi's chosen successor in Kenya, the response to the deaths of Arafat, Abacha, and, more recently, the reformers who arose out of bungled electoral frauds in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan.

But behind those dates are months and years of organizing, struggle, failure, and ridicule, as well as continued support from the United States and other public and private friends of democracy.

Every time I see jubilant Ukrainians, I think of a trip I made to that country in 1991 to observe a referendum on Ukrainian independence twinned with a presidential vote. In a rural polling station, cheering villagers served shots of vodka to me and the Canadian parliamentarian I was accompanying. When we raised our concerns about the apparatchik past of the leading candidate, one man assured me, "If we don't like him, we'll vote him out!"

Ukrainians have been trying to assert the power of the people over the "party of power" ever since. It took them 13 years, through repression, assassination, dubious elections, and democracy-building aid from the United States that at times seemed quite pointless. American NGOs and the George H.W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations deserve credit for keeping up that assistance when all seemed lost. But the credit for building and effectively using a pro-democracy movement belongs to Ukrainian initiative, not to any American democracy program.

Waves of democratization die out just as fast as they rise up. Yes, Georgia's revolution 17 months ago inspired democrats in Ukraine. And events in Georgia and Ukraine inspired Zimbabwe's opposition to protest with new vigor after emerging evidence of fraud in recent elections there. Zimbabwe's opposition MDF party has paid more than its share of democracy's dues in intimidation and violence. But the last time I checked, President Mugabe felt well-enough ensconced to attend Pope John Paul's funeral and get chummy with Britain's Prince Charles.

So far, the post-Iraq wave of Arab democratization has much to be modest about. You can argue—and President Bush has—that democracy was already on the march in the Middle East. Morocco, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan have all had more open elections in recent years. Nongovernmental groups are carrying on fascinating discussions in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The recent "Arab Human Development Report" cites survey evidence that Arabs value democratic governance as much or more than the people of any other region. It documents recent advances, but ultimately concludes that these "do not add up to a serious effort to dispel the prevailing environment of repression."

Over the last two decades, open and representative governments have sprung up across geography, culture, and circumstance in places many believed they would never flourish. President Bush and his inimitable wordsmith Michael Gerson are right about one very important thing:

"It should be clear to all that Islam—the faith of one-fifth of humanity—is consistent with democratic rule. . . . Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty."

It's not that President Bush is the first U.S. leader to discover this; like his predecessors, he tends to forget it

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when it is inconvenient: when free media like Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya present coverage we find repellent; when the money to promote democracy in unpromising places is needed instead for tax cuts and the privatization of Social Security; when the strongmen of Egypt and Saudi Arabia are needed to torture our prisoners; and when democracy spits up leaders we don't like—and who neither like nor need us.

But if President Bush chooses to remember his insight about Middle East freedom—and truly live by it—he can still be right about how to spread democracy in the Middle East. The people of that region will, at long last, have their say—of that there can be little doubt. We will see popular demands advancing truly popular governments in Jordan and Egypt, Syrian influence rejected by a popular Lebanese government, and Saudis and their neighbors holding real elections. President Bush's influence on how long it takes for that day to arrive, and how Americans feel about it when it does, is still very much up to him. ◆

Turns out diplomacy works

By Nancy Soderberg

There are hopeful signs of historic progress on foreign policy as President Bush passes the first hundred-day mark of his second term. Iraq is headed in the right direction; Israelis and Palestinians appear poised for the first real progress in four years; and there are signs of nascent Arab reform in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. The president's new focus on freedom could help reverse troubling undemocratic trends in Russia, Pakistan, and beyond. In light of these events, some critics of the administration are second-guessing their harsh appraisal of Bush's first term and are wondering whether Bush knew what he was doing all along.

Not so fast. The positive developments of the last few months are indeed encouraging and are to be embraced. They are not, however, a consequence of the Bush administration's harsh, unilateral foreign policy, but instead the result of a not-so subtle shift to a more realistic foreign policy favored by past presidents. It seems diplomacy—that much-maligned policy option—gets results.

For most of his first term, Bush was under the spell of the myth that, as a superpower, America could bend the world to its will, primarily on its own and through military means. The results of that muscle diplomacy are in. America is bearing the burden of rebuilding and securing Iraq essentially on its own, while Iran and North Korea have been pursuing their nuclear weapons programs unchecked. Because the administration has undermined myriad arms control conventions, weapons of mass destruction may be now more accessible to terrorists. Anti-Americanism has spiked to unprecedented heights, making the world less willing to act with us to share the superpower burden. Who could imagine student protestors in Tiananmen Square today building a replica of the Statue of Liberty as they did in May 1989?

While it has been loath to admit it, the Bush administration is quietly shifting back to the tough work of diplomacy. After the administration claimed America could protect itself on its own, and that it did not need "old Europe," working in partnership is suddenly back in fashion. And it is getting results—not, as some have claimed because of events in Iraq, but rather because American diplomats are seeking once again to return the United States to its rightful role as a persuader, not just enforcer.

Recent events in the Middle East demonstrate the case. In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak has called for free multiparty elections. But what precipitated this development? It turns out it was likely a good old-fashioned diplomatic threat—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice cancelled her trip to the Middle East, with the State Department citing frustration over Mubarak's crackdown on political opponents. The speculation that Mubarak is also seeking ways to legitimize a possible transfer of power to his son most likely played another part in his shift.

In Lebanon, the United States will need wise leadership to help manage any transition there, as well as possible changes in Syria. The administration's response to the apparent Syrian role in the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri has not been to go it alone; rather, we worked with the United Nations, and

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particularly with the French, and called with one international voice for the removal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. The new hope for peace between Israel and Palestine had little to do with Washington's policies but rather was sparked by the death of Yasser Arafat and the rise of a new, more responsible Palestinian leadership. These developments have little to do with events in Iraq, but each will require sophisticated, nuanced American diplomacy—as will the management of the continuing transition to democracy in Baghdad.

Finally, the Bush administration is quick to point to Libya as an example of a situation in which the invasion of Iraq led a dictator to back down and give up his country's nuclear weapons. But the evidence is that it was diplomacy—and not the threat of force—that led to the desired result. For 15 years, following the 1988 downing of Pan Am flight 103, the international community pressed Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi to admit responsibility, hand over those suspected of the bombing, and pay compensation. While the Iraq war likely made an impression, Qaddafi's change of heart regarding WMDs was in fact the culmination of years of tough international negotiations, sanctions, and diplomacy by this president and his two predecessors, his father and President Clinton. President George W. Bush would do well to learn from this success and negotiate a deal to end the dangerous nuclear weapons programs in North Korea—despite the administration's derision of that same approach taken by President Clinton in 1994.

Despite these facts, neoconservatives will no doubt claim this progress occurred only because our diplomacy is backed up by the threat of force. Certainly, the threat of force can assist diplomacy—but only if it is a real threat, as it was in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. The truth is, with approximately 150,000 U.S. troops bogged down in Iraq for at least the next few years, any threat of invasion of Iran, North Korea, or Syria is a hollow one. Had the United States not fallen victim to the fallacy that we can go it alone, primarily through military means, we could have made more progress on addressing the threats from terrorists and proliferators over the last four years.

Let us hope that President Bush has seen the need to abandon this dangerous myth and shift America back to a more realistic role of engaging the world. Certainly, his new, ally-friendly rhetoric on display during his recent kiss-and-make-up trip to Europe indicates that some new thinking has been going on—although the nomination of John Bolton to be United Nations ambassador is a sign that the militant, unilateralist faction within the Bush administration still has significant clout.

If this is indeed a real change in policy, America is poised to serve as a catalyst for progress on a range of important issues, including Arab-Israeli peace, support for democracy, Arab reform, and a stronger world coalition against proliferators and terrorists. Such success, however, would stem not from the failed policies of macho preemption, but rather from a shift to a new, more realistic policy for the second term. Positive developments across the Middle East should rightly be cheered. But they should also serve as a reminder that diplomacy isn't something to be scoffed at. ◆

Praise the message, blame the messenger

By Michael Tomasky

I didn't react to President Bush's second inaugural address with quite the same degree of hair-stiffening alarm that many liberals did. I grasped, obviously, the moments of dark irony: his line about "the unfinished work of American freedom"; and the promise that "all who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know the United States will not ignore your oppression or excuse your oppressors," when there's still, it seems to me, quite a lot of ignoring going on when it suits us.

But at the same time, I was a bit chagrined whenever I heard liberal commentators or Democratic politicians slip casually from denouncing the hypocrisies embedded in the text to disparaging the goals laid out in the speech. Wait: Opposing tyranny? Expressing faith in the idea of freedom as man's best destiny? Offering encouragement to democratic dissidents? I thought our side was supposed to be *for* all those things. True, those lofty words invite certain questions (actually, a ferocious debate) about the policies the

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United States should put into place to achieve those aims. Liberals can and obviously will disagree about when, where, and how the United States should act against dictators and on behalf of struggling people. And progressives are right to point out when the administration doesn't live up to those words, or when its idea of living up to them is mainly to make a lot of things go Boom!

Much of the discussion in progressive circles so far has been misplaced: I'm less concerned with the precise question of how much credit Bush deserves for the encouraging events unfolding in the Middle East than I am with how liberalism can reclaim the rhetoric of freedom and democratization for itself. And when I say "liberalism" in that context, I mean, really, the Democratic Party, because liberal intellectuals can yap about democracy until doomsday, but it won't matter until elected Democrats take up the topic with conviction.

Wait: Opposing tyranny? Expressing faith in the idea of freedom as man's best destiny? Offering encouragement to democratic dissidents? I thought our side was supposed to be for all those things.

The record there is dispiriting to say the least. I was disgusted with the Democrats, in the months after September 11, when they had nothing to say about what the attack meant for how the United States had to engage with the world. I asked a handful of senators and representatives and their aides why they hadn't been more aggressive in laying out a public response and vision, and they always gave me variations on two answers: "Well, that's not our job; the president makes foreign policy"; or, "We have to wait until we have a candidate." Those responses are fine for normal times. But those weren't normal times. The world had changed, and Democrats had nothing to say about it.

With the Democrats having mostly kept mum about American principles and policies overseas, well, sure, Bush does deserve some degree of credit for pushing democracy. I disagree strenuously with almost everything this administration has done. But I do think that an American president should talk about democracy and name it as an ideal to which we believe the world's nations should aspire. We can hold off terrorism through diplomacy, international policing, and, where necessary, war, but we'll really defeat it only when democracy gains some purchase in the Muslim world. And regardless of terrorism—thinking about world poverty, disease, and the more general hope that people in any country can fulfill their human potential—we need to affirm that democracy can help address all those concerns.

It would be a little dishonest of me to say otherwise, because in 2003, I wrote the following sentences: "...just starting the process, emphasizing the problem [of democratization], making democratic values a real priority in the world, could initiate dramatic change over time.... The world will start, in its lumbering, petulant way, to change." Of course, the president I had in mind doing that emphasizing was the Democratic president who was to be elected in 2004. Oh well.

But there are good ways and bad ways to promote democracy. Or to put a finer point on it: Doesn't it follow that promoting democracy needs to go hand in hand with promoting an image of the United States as the world's admired leader, whose example the aspiring democrats of the world seek to emulate? Of course it does. And that, it seems to me, is the fatal flaw of democracy promotion, Bush-style. The world hates us, and not just terrorists and tyrants.

When I saw Bush booed and whistled (whistling being the European boo) at the Pope John Paul II's funeral, and realized that people devout and grief-stricken enough to brave those crowds to attend their religious leader's last rites felt moved even in that solemn context to tell the international cameras what they thought of the American president, it occurred to me—not for the first time, but more strikingly than ever—that most of the world would not buy a used car or a Bill of Rights from this man.

A president who was respected around the world would make a far more effective pitchman for our values. Bush does not have the world's respect, and it's very hard to imagine he'll gain it by the time he leaves office. This isn't just some woolly-eyed liberal plaint. It's a ground-level, real-world problem. Ask yourself: How many liberation movements, particularly in the Arab world, would like to be identified with George W. Bush? A dictator with even a crude propaganda apparatus could make short, easy work of such a movement. The world's despots have a handy straw man at their disposal as long as Bush is president.

That's where the opportunity lies for liberals, and Democrats: to argue that our ability to spread democracy is linked to our political and moral credibility with the rest of the world. That may be a hard case to make in today's Washington, but I think it's an argument most Americans will accept. Someone just has to make it to them. ◆

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Is Arnold Losing It?

Gov. Schwarzenegger is looking less like Reagan and more like Ventura.

By Mark Z. Barabak

Illustration by Fred Harper

The governor of California is seated in his office at Oak Productions, smoking a cigar and sipping espresso, his black cowboy boots propped on the distressed wood table before him. A plate of apple strudel sits untouched. The Santa Monica outpost, which houses the governor's film company, doubles as his state office whenever Arnold Schwarzenegger is in the neighborhood. It is quite unlike any governor's office anywhere in the country, that much is certain. The walls are lined with movie posters and photographs of Schwarzenegger in all manner of political and commercial poses. Outside the door to his inner office stands a life-size mock up of Schwarzenegger as the Terminator, his face half gone and a red laser eye gleaming. Inside the office, amid a jumble of movie memorabilia, rests a stuffed crocodile. Overall, the effect is interior design by a very rich, very extravagant 16 year-old.

The governor is speaking of his role on a larger stage as smooth jazz wafts in the background. Far be it for him to offer prescriptions for the GOP. "I'm not elected to represent the Republicans," Schwarzenegger said over the course of a 55-minute interview with *The Washington Monthly*. "When I look at my pad of things that I want to accomplish every day, or every week, or every month... it does not have on there anywhere to get more Republicans registered.... It's not something that I ever get up in the morning and say, 'This is my mission.'"

That may be just as well. His support for gay rights, stem-cell research, legal abortion, gun control, vigorous environmental protection, and prisons that focus less on punishment and more on rehabilitation are hardly in the mainstream of GOP thinking. He suggests that religion "should have no effect on politics,'" giving a back-of-the-hand to the Christian conservatives who have become a pillar of the national party. In many ways, Schwarzenegger's style and philosophy recall those of California's last celebrity governor, Jerry Brown, who famously practiced what he called "canoe politics: Paddle a little on the left, paddle a little on the right, and keep on going right down the middle." Or, as Schwarzenegger himself put it: "One has to find some kind of happy medium in this whole thing. So that's the way I do my governing."

It may not win hearts and minds in the ruddiest red-state precincts. But it may be the only way for Schwarzenegger to succeed in California, where the GOP remains a distinct minority in both the statehouse and among registered voters. Schwarzenegger is something of an anomaly in Sacramento, not quite an accidental governor, but one elected under extraordinary circumstances: a recall election that short-circuited the usual political process and played like campaign burlesque. It may have been the *only* way Schwarzenegger could have been elected governor, even in California.

The glamour and novelty he brought to the drowsy state capital served him well throughout his first year in office.

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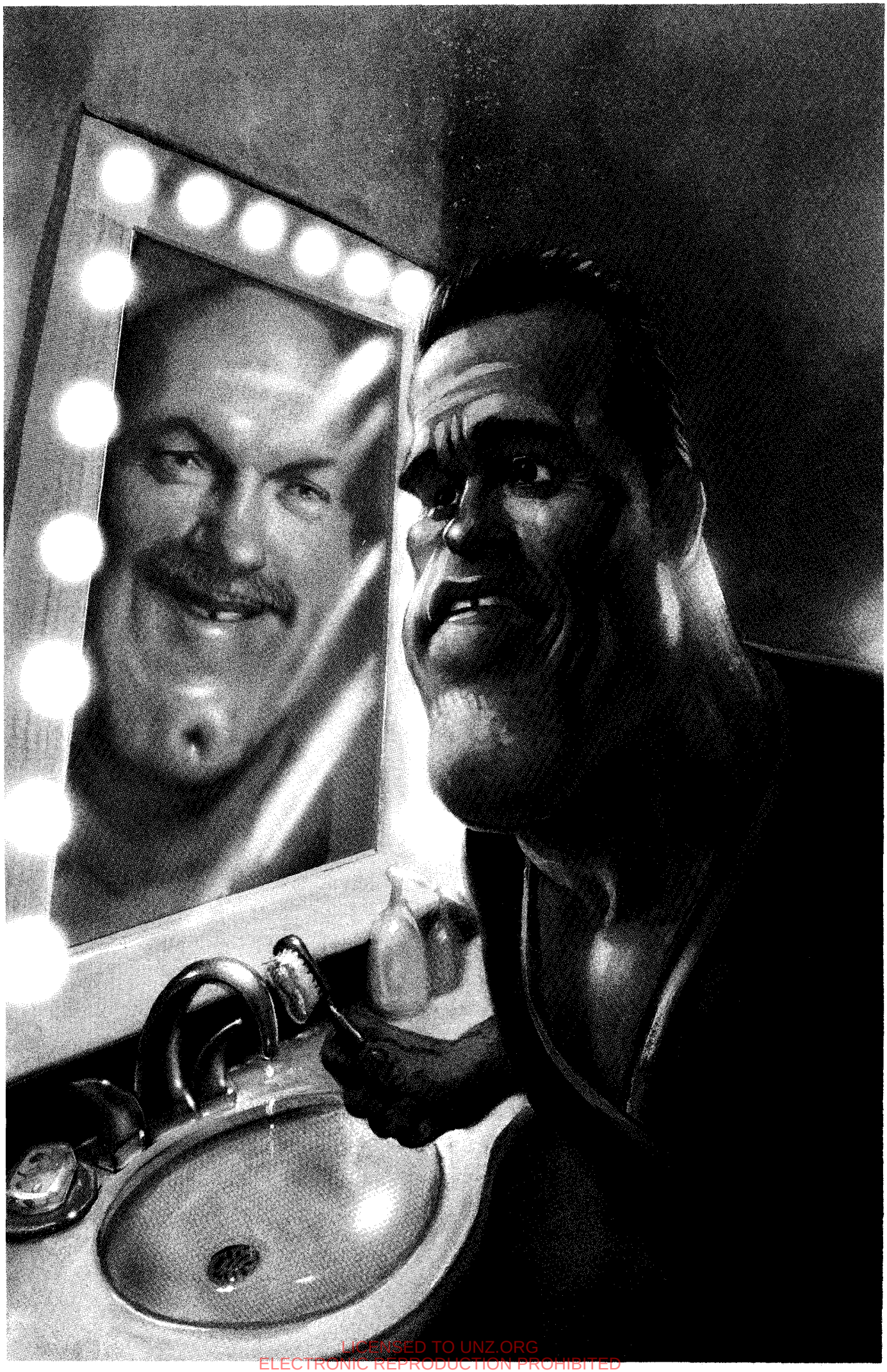

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Getty Images

But in the second reel, much of the glitter has started flaking from California's movie-star governor, making him appear a good deal more like one of the standard-issue politicians he regularly vilifies.

When he was first elected, some Republican strategists—as well as fretful Democrats—thought Schwarzenegger's centrist approach, enticing to voters of both parties, might represent the future of an even more dominant national GOP. There was discussion of amending the Constitution to let an immigrant like the Austrian-born Schwarzenegger become president and speculation that he, like a certain other actor-turned-California-governor, would become a transformative national figure.

But in recent months, such talk has diminished considerably. Schwarzenegger showed during the recall that conventional politicians in a hurry-up campaign are no match for someone of his outsized personality. But governing has proven far different. He has been forced to pare back much of his second-year reform agenda. His poll numbers are sagging, and newly emboldened Democrats are challenging the governor at every turn. Now, the question is whether Schwarzenegger can make the transition from a cartoon-like character, all swagger and bluster, into a political leader capable of using his fame and considerable charm to achieve something lasting and meaningful.

Can he repeat the success of Ronald Reagan, who picked up Barry Goldwater's fallen standard and made Western conservatism the governing philosophy of the Republican Party? Or is Schwarzenegger destined to relive the implosion of Jesse Ventura, another muscle-bound insurgent who won early acclaim as Minnesota governor, stumbled badly, then disappeared—from politics anyway—without a trace?

Benchmarking Reagan

Back in the 1970s, when Ronald Reagan was California governor, the Los Angeles County Republican Party sponsored a biannual seminar known as the "Western Winner's Roundup." From across the region, GOP nominees for Congress and state legislatures would gather at an airport hotel for a series of workshops on campaign strategy and tactics. Everyone was welcome; privately, staffers called it the "Western Loser's Roundup," reflecting the often mediocre quality of the candidates and their dismal performance on Election Day.

The highlight each year was Reagan's keynote address. The governor would arrive early and retire to a small conference room where he would individually greet each of the candidates and pose for an hour or so before dinner. Smiling his crinkly smile, treating his supplicants like the big shots they weren't, Reagan appeared in grip-and-grin photos from the Cascade Mountains to the Sonoran Desert.

The current governor of California is decidedly more stinting in his political generosity. When Republican candidates gathered after the 2004 primaries at a luxury hotel across the street from the state Capitol, Schwarzenegger dropped by and posed for portraits with the hopefuls. But afterward, his office controlled the pictures for release at the governor's discretion. Later, when Schwarzenegger agreed to a lone fundraiser for U.S. Senate candidate Bill Jones, who was waging a hapless struggle against Democratic incumbent Barbara Boxer, reporters and camera crews were barred.

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The question is whether Schwarzenegger can make the transition from a cartoon-like character, all swagger and bluster, into a political leader capable of using his fame and charm to achieve something lasting and meaningful.

(Not that it mattered; an air-traffic glitch prevented the governor from showing up at the Beverly Hilton hotel. There was no make-up appearance.)

Schwarzenegger's standoffishness should come as little surprise. He was elected governor essentially as a nonpartisan combatant. The effort to recall Democrat Gray Davis had been led by conservative Republicans; but once they gathered the voter signatures needed to force a special election, the field was open to all comers. In all, 135 candidates eventually made the ballot, including a Ripley's menagerie of hustlers, performance artists and other unabashed publicity-seekers, most of whom were not already politicians. There was no primary and no runoff, thus no need to pass the litmus tests of one party or another. Schwarzenegger ran not as a Republican but a reformer, with a message perfectly pitched to one of California's regular voter upheavals.

In a state that's still as blue as the Pacific (Democrats enjoy an 8.5-point registration edge over Republicans, virtually the same as before the governor was elected), keeping the Republican Party at arm's length may be the smartest way for Schwarzenegger to position himself for reelection in 2006, should he run. (Republicans send up nightly prayers. But the governor's influential wife, Maria Shriver, recently told Oprah Winfrey she wants her husband home.)

Action, action, action

When Schwarzenegger was elected in October 2003, he promised to revolutionize the way California operates. He spoke of action, action, action. But in the roughly year-and-a-half since, his record has been decidedly mixed, stopping well short of the extravagant promises he made while campaigning and the larger-than-life image he brought to Sacramento.

Upon taking office, Schwarzenegger immediately repealed an unpopular vehicle license fee—blowing a further $4 billion hole in the state budget—and overturned legislation that would have granted driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. Both moves won wide applause. He worked with Democrats to overhaul the workers' compensation system, renegotiated gambling compacts with the state's Indian tribes, and forged a bipartisan coalition to push through a $15 billion borrowing measure that kicked California's fiscal reckoning further down the road, limiting the pain for politicians in both parties. But as Dan Schnur, a Republican strategist and one of Sacramento's wryest observers, put it, "Nobody builds statues to the guy who passed workmen's comp reform."

Schwarzenegger began the new year by setting his sights considerably higher. In his January 2005 State of the State address, he outlined the most ambitious legislative agenda Sacramento has seen in a very long time. He proposed paying teachers based on merit and not their length of employment, partially privatizing the retirement system for state employees, enshrining a legal limit on state spending, eliminating nearly 100 bureaucratic boards and commissions, revamping the state's prison system, and eliminating partisan gerrymandering by allowing retired judges, not lawmakers, to draw the state's political boundaries starting in 2006.

"If we here in this chamber don't work together to reform the government," he warned lawmakers, "the people will rise up and reform it themselves. And I will join them. And I will fight with them."

Schwarzenegger drew a line: If lawmakers defied him, he would go over their heads and call a special election, the sixth statewide vote in three years. To back up his threat, the governor launched a $50 million fundraising frenzy, which made Davis—once the very model of political voraciousness—appear amateur by comparison.

After much bluster from both sides, the governor began yielding, shelving certain proposals and signaling that he was open to negotiations on others. He was plainly wounded when teachers, nurses, police, and firefighters—all having separate beefs with Schwarzenegger—began dogging his public appearances and mussing his public image. He fired back with TV ads and rhetoric that were alternately inflammatory and contrite.

Part of the problem seems to be apathy. For all the governor's efforts, the obtuse matters of redistricting and worker retirement just haven't stirred Californians much. Ineptitude also played a part; the governor abruptly dropped his support for a measure overhauling the state pension system when it turned out that the ballot initiative could deny death benefits to police and firefighters. The governor capitulated after weeks of bad publicity, including complaints from the widows and orphans of public-safety officers.

But more than anything, Schwarzenegger has suffered from the way in which he tried to challenge the entire power structure in Sacramento: frontally, all at once, with little preparation for the inevitable backlash.

It may be the contradictions are finally catching up with Schwarzenegger. After campaigning as the scourge of special interests and vowing to take money from no one, the

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governor has collected political cash at a ravenous pace, raising more than $30 million since taking office. (Invitations to a recent Sacramento fundraiser, "An Evening With Governor Schwarzenegger," blithely offered access at four levels, starting at $10,000 for a ticket and one photograph and topping out at $100,000 for a seat at the head table.)

He routinely assails Democratic lawmakers at the same time that he insists he would prefer to work in bipartisan fashion. In one radio interview, Schwarzenegger criticized lawmakers for wasting time on "silly bills," such as one regulating the height of motorcycle handlebars. Unmentioned was the fact the governor had signed the bill into law three to four weeks earlier.

Or perhaps it is merely the turning of the political season. Whatever the reason, the governor is no longer viewed as the invincible dragon-slayer he once was. While most handicappers agree that Schwarzenegger remains a strong favorite to win reelection in 2006, the prospect no longer seems as certain as it did as recently as six months ago.

Worse, perhaps, for a governor so image-obsessed has been his decline in public opinion surveys, which has been almost entirely a function of Democratic and independent defections. (Like President Bush, Schwarzenegger continues to enjoy near universal support among Republicans despite his disdain for party-building.) By late February, his approval number in the statewide Field Poll was a decidedly mortal 55 percent, down 10 points in five months. More galling still, the governor's rating stood a tick below that of the rejected Davis before the bottom fell out for the beleaguered Democrat amid the 2001 California energy fiasco.

An encore performance

If the narrative arc sounds familiar—a charismatic, unconventional governor comes to the statehouse in a weird election, succeeds at minor reforms, but soon overreaches with ambitions exceeding his political skills—that's because we've seen this movie before.

Former Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura won office in 1998 as an independent in a fluky three-way contest. He began his tenure with promise and in his first year achieved some modest accomplishments. He managed to push an on-time budget through the Democratic Senate and Republican House with relative ease. He also made a start at improving public transit and reducing congestion in the Twin Cities area. By the end of his second year, however, voters grew weary of Ventura's macho act, impatient with his inability to balance the state budget or work with lawmakers, and indifferent to initiatives such as creating a unicameral legislature. Lawmakers, once cowed, gleefully struck back, slashing—among other things—money for the governor's security detail. Ventura left office bitter and mocked, his "populist-centrist" reforms largely unfulfilled.

The danger for Arnold Schwarzenegger is falling into a similar spiral. Voters are clearly less awed by their celebrity governor in his second year in office, and he's staked out ambitious goals that would try even a far more practiced politician. "He's shown himself to be someone who really can communicate with voters," says Tony Quinn, a non-partisan Sacramento analyst. But more than any philosophy or set of policies, he suggests, Schwarzenegger's tenure, thus far, has been primarily about salesmanship. "The problem he seems to be having now is getting a consensus on what we need to sell," Quinn adds. In short, the business of governing.

There are reasons to believe Schwarzenegger is smarter and more resilient than Ventura. He has shown a willingness to cut his losses before the political wounds fester: When the public responded with outrage to a proposal to hasten the execution of cats and dogs—at a savings of $14 million to local communities—Schwarzenegger quickly dropped the plan, thereby limiting the damage from one of his biggest public relations blunders. He backed off controversial plans to slice health-care funding for the elderly and disabled and, more recently, abandoned efforts to "wipe out" 88 government boards and commissions in the face of widespread political opposition.

Stuart Spencer, the campaign genius who helped Reagan become governor, then move from Sacramento to the White House, is among those keeping a close watch on Schwarzenegger.

"It's too early to tell," Spencer says from his retirement aerie above Palm Springs. "He's an aberration. He's not viewed as a Republican, he's viewed as a star and a personality. A lot of personalities have a short shelf life." Some, a la Reagan, make the transition." In Schwarzenegger's case, Spencer surmises, his future rests on whether he proves himself "a great political leader. He hasn't proven that yet."

President Arnold?

Arnold Schwarzenegger would love to be president someday. (First, however, there is the matter of his reelection in 2006. He is not expected to announce his intentions before the end of the year, if then.)

Before Schwarzenegger can run for president, however, there is the matter of the U.S. Constitution, specifically Article II, which holds that a president must be a "natural born" citizen. Schwarzenegger was born in Austria and maintains dual citizenship. Supporters have started a movement to amend the Constitution, with the governor's quiet support. (The Schwarzenegger camp sent one booster a complimentary picture of the governor to use in her effort, sparing her the royalty fee she'd been paying for a different shot.)

Still, the odds of success are exceedingly long. In the whole history of the United States, just 27 of more than 10,000 proposed amendments have passed. Opinion polls have shown little public support for overhauling the Constitution; one survey of California voters showed opposition running 2-to-1, and that was back when Schwarzenegger's popularity was at 65 percent. Moreover, consider the political hurdles: A proposed constitutional amendment must win the support of two-thirds of both houses of Congress, followed by ratification by 38 states. As Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, a political scholar at the University of Southern California, notes, "There's

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Schwarzenegger was plainly wounded when teachers, nurses, police, and firefighters—all having separate beefs with the governor—began dogging his public appearances and mussing his public image.

not a senator who doesn't wake up in the morning and look in the mirror and see the next president of the United States. You think they're going to roll over and open the door for Arnold Schwarzenegger? I don't think so."

Still, an immigrant governor can hope. For someone who arrived in America with little more than a gym bag and his dreams (as the movie poster might say), nothing can seem utterly impossible. And refreshingly, Schwarzenegger does not offer the usual rococo double-talk when asked about his future political prospects.

"If I do my job really well in California and I create the reforms this year, I don't have to worry about anything," he says. "Running for governor. Walking away from the whole thing.... I can have all the different options, to run for another office, whatever it may be. The key thing is to do whatever you do well, and that opens opportunities."

Hence, Schwarzenegger stands at a pivot point in his governorship. The policies that he has made his priority in 2005 are of a much different order than anything he has previously attempted, and not just because Democrats and their allies are fiercely resisting the governor, tagging him with the partisan label he has worked so hard to avoid.

The fact is that Schwarzenegger's greatest political successes have come when he transcended politics and rose above partisanship. First, as an epic figure in the 2003 recall and, more recently, when he linked hands with prominent Democrats—among them U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein and former Govs. Davis and Brown—to push through last year's borrowing measure and defeat a provision to relax the state's three-strikes prison sentencing law.

There has been little public clamor for such reforms as redrawing California's political lines, overhauling state worker pensions, or changing the way public schoolteachers are paid. "He's facing a whole new battle, a whole new level of competition," says Mark Baldassare, director of research at the Public Policy Institute of California, a non-partisan think tank in San Francisco. "There are pretty serious odds for him to overcome as a Republican governor."

Democrats in Sacramento have learned not to underestimate Schwarzenegger, in the same way that Democrats in Washington know better than to count Bush out too soon. But the president has never tried to do what the former muscle man is attempting to accomplish: maintaining his popularity with Republicans while shunning much of what the party stands for; bidding for the support of Democrats while antagonizing many of the party's core constituencies; creating a sense of urgency around issues about which most voters have never given much thought.

Schwarzenegger, who has known little in the way of professional failure, continues to brim with outward confidence, even as he acknowledges uncertainty over where both he and California are headed. "All I know is that I have faith in myself and in my abilities to bring people together, that we will be successful," Schwarzenegger said, punctuating his point with the stub of his cigar. "But how it's going to happen, that should be a nice surprise."

Just ask Ventura

For all his heresies, some Republicans say the party would be foolish to ignore Schwarzenegger and his hybrid philosophy, treating him as some overstuffed attraction to be trotted out at fundraisers, or to give an American Dream speech like the one he delivered on Bush's behalf at the Republican National Convention last summer.

"If we want to get some blue states to turn red, we ought to take a lesson in what he's saying," says Tom Rath, a veteran GOP strategist in the lead presidential primary state of New Hampshire.

Schnur, the Sacramento party strategist, suggests there is an important difference "between a precarious majority and a permanent majority."

"Bill Clinton spent the better part of the 1990s convincing economically upscale, socially liberal voters"—the famed soccer parents—"to move Democratic," Schnur says. "George W. Bush has spent the last several years convincing economically populist, cultural conservatives to move in precisely the opposite direction. To take the current Republican majority and lock it in long term, some of those soccer parents are going to have to come back. And Schwarzenegger represents the sector of the party best equipped to speak to those soccer parents."

But the Republican Party is hardly in the shambles that followed Goldwater's landslide defeat, suggesting Schwarzenegger would have to prove himself an extraordinarily effective leader to move the national GOP in his centrist direction. Which means, for starters, delivering on his vaunted "year of reform."

Experience shows there is a limit to the politics of personality. Unorthodox political philosophies tend to rise and fall with the fortunes of their messenger. Celebrity can only carry an insurgency so far. Just ask Jesse Ventura. ◆

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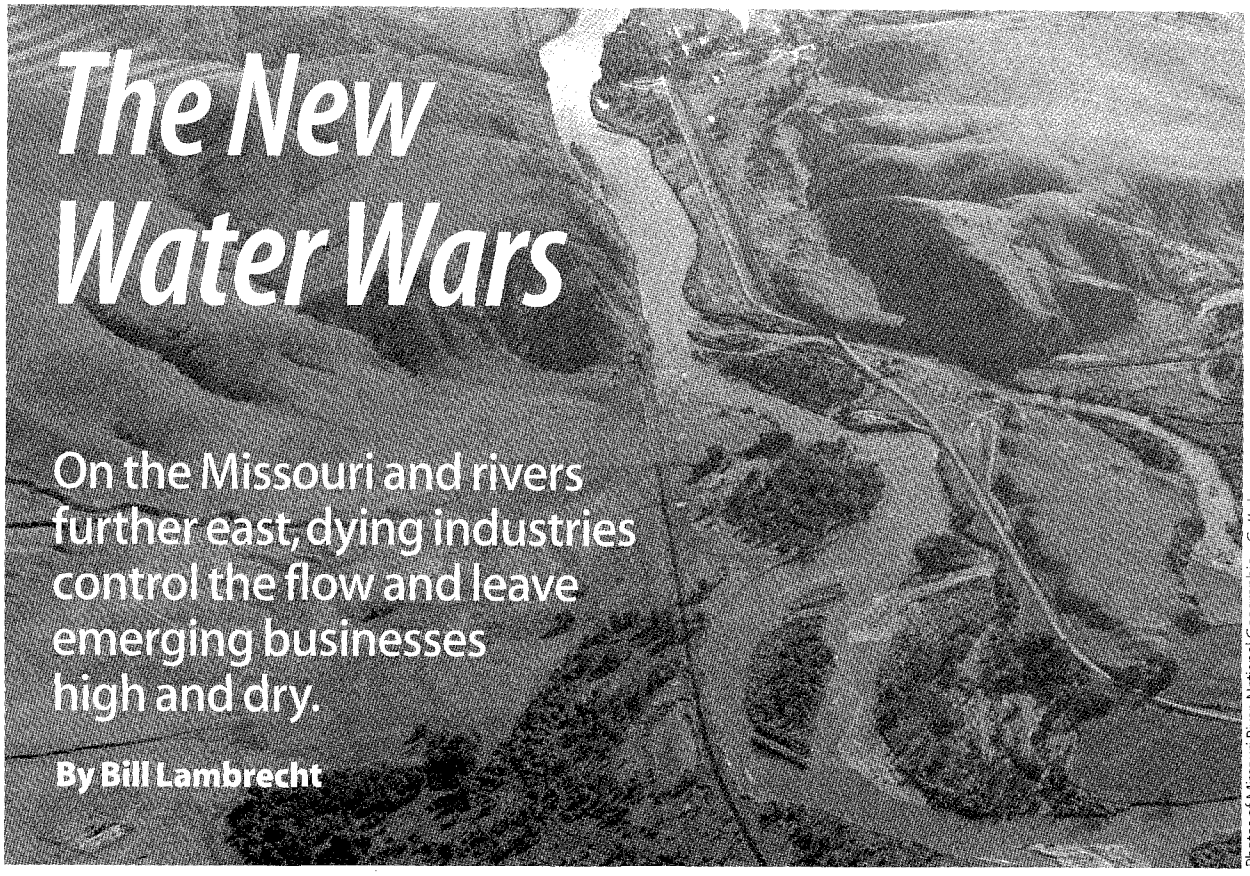

The New Water Wars

On the Missouri and rivers further east, dying industries control the flow and leave emerging businesses high and dry.

By Bill Lambrecht

Photos of Missouri River, National Geographic—Getty Images

Bob Shadwell, the proprietor of the Point of View Lodge in Pollock, S.D., and a professional fisherman, is in the habit of sending emails to the White House on Monday mornings. He is not sure if they are ever read, and, if they are, they have certainly not yet turned up much in the way of response, but they are remarkable for their singularity of focus. Shadwell's obsession matches that of his customers, and indeed that of folks I met throughout the drought-prone Dakotas. He wants the Army Corps of Engineers to let the Missouri rise higher on his stretch of the river, Lake Oahe, and give the local river recreation industry something it desperately needs: water. He believes that the Corps is unfairly keeping the river low in the Dakotas to appease a few connected farmers and barge operators in Missouri.

September 11, 2002
Dear President Bush:

I am writing this letter today on the anniversary of the World Trade Center attack. We feel like here in South Dakota we're under attack by bureaucracy and plain bad politics. We know of your promise to Missouri farmers during your campaign. Did you not know that South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana are part of the Union?

It's time to make changes in this system of GOOD OLD BOY POLITICS!!!! Start looking at the big picture. These states have as much right to Missouri River water as Missouri does. Remember what Mark Twain said: 'Men will vote over whisky and go to war over water.'

When I first visited Shadwell in the summer of 2002, he was emailing his Monday morning messages to the White House with an alluring offer: free lodging at Point of View Resort and a guided fishing trip for lunker walleyes. He hadn't heard back, and that's probably just as well. The president professes to be a sporting man, but sport is hard to find along Lake Oahe. Touring Shadwell's 60-acre property along Ritter Bay, I noted that the water was so low and had receded so far from land that the cove fronting his Point of View restaurant was situated roughly a half-mile from water. "It seems like the country really doesn't know our plight out here. It seems that, regardless of the situation, downstream barge traffic takes precedence," Shadwell told me over a beer at his empty bar.

There are plenty of Bob Shadwells in the Dakotas, people whose Missouri River recreation businesses need water in the worst way from federally managed dams. The drought that engulfed the region in the first years of the new century was the immediate cause for distress. In August of 1999, the elevation on Lake Oahe, calculated in feet above sea level, was 1,617. When I first visited there, it had dropped by 29 feet to 1,588. Water was also low at Fort Peck and Garrison. Together with Oahe, lakes at those dams hold 85 percent of the storage in the Missouri River system.

Bill Lambrecht is Washington bureau chief of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. This article is adapted from his current book, *Big Muddy Blues* (Thomas Dunne Books). Copyright Bill Lambrecht 2005.

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This was a punishing drought. But rain or not, the problem along the Missouri River is chronic. Routinely, there is not enough water in a system that gives priority to navigation. The Army Corps of Engineers interprets its Master Manual to say there must be sufficient water in the 732-mile stretch of lower river to maintain navigation, a criterion which in recent years has helped to keep the upper Missouri mighty dry. Congress and the courts have refused to stipulate otherwise, so somebody has to suffer. Right now, that somebody is Bob Shadwell.

I talked to Shadwell many times over the next two years, as the water continued to drop. He felt more desperate all the time, like a fish flopping in a boat and gasping for air. Abandonment can take over in a hurry in a remote land. The Point of View is situated near South Dakota's border with North Dakota where the earth is an exotic blend of camelbacks, swales, and hillocks, some perfectly round, that fellows hereabouts have named after parts of the female anatomy. Otherwise, you see nothing but a few cows on the five-mile gravel road back to Shadwell's lodge.

South Dakota and North Dakota have been trapped in a fight with Missouri over the river's level since the 1950s when the Army Corps of Engineers first began putting dams and locks on the river to control its flow. For a half-century, they have mostly lost. But their fight has recently taken on a greater urgency, given the $85-million-per-year recreation business on the Missouri—fly-fishing in Montana, trophy walleye hunting in the Dakotas, and weekend boating for tired suburbanites from Denver and Sioux Falls. That may not sound like much, but it dwarfs the shriveled, $9-million-per-year barge business the dams were originally built to protect, but which can no longer compete with cheaper trading and other modes of freight.

The fight over the Missouri is usually understood in Washington—when it's understood at all—as little more than a ruckus between the bearded, blue-jeaned biologists from the Fish and Wildlife Service (who want water levels in Missouri restored to some semblance of their natural flows to protect nesting birds and the pallid sturgeon) and military technocrats from the Corps, who are trying to keep their congressional paymasters and their allies along the river happy by keeping the river artificially controlled. But the dramatic decline in barge traffic between North Sioux City, S.D., and St. Louis, Mo., and the rise of the recreation industry further upstream, began to change that political calculus. By 2001, the legendarily intractable Corps suggested that it was ready to make some changes in river flows, handing a victory to the sturgeon and the Dakotas—a day that the odd coalition of fishers, Dakota pols, Fish and Wildlife biologists, and conservation groups thought would never arrive.

But the last four years have been far from a triumph for these groups. An aggressive congressional delegation, led by Sen. Christopher Bond (R-Mo.) and backed by a sympathetic White House eager to keep Missouri's electoral votes in the GOP column, has fought back, and the battle has drifted into a stalemate as knotty and dense as ever. Missouri River barges may be few, but they continue to get the water they need. And, as the drought persists, the Dakotas remain parched.

Now, similar political tensions are sparking battles over water in parts of the country that have never seen them before. In Florida, Arkansas, Georgia, and elsewhere, politically connected interests with declining economic rationales for the water are using the Corps to preserve their advantages usually over emerging populations and industries with a growing justification for that water. Water wars, a feature of Western politics for decades, have begun to move east.

This state of affairs won't last forever. Politics, like economics, eventually gives way to the law of supply and demand. The status quo of federal water management of American rivers is like the Soviet Union in the early 1980s, a grossly inefficient, economically senseless system kept alive by political and economic interests trying to protect their increasingly rickety power. One good blow and the whole thing could crumble.

Scripture of the water gods

Army engineers in suburban Omaha lord over the life of the Missouri River.

On a Monday in October 2000, my quest to understand how the Missouri runs and why has led me to the Reservoir Control Center in the Army Corps' Omaha District for the first of two weekly meetings that will decide how the waters of the river will flow.

Guiding this 21st-century command meeting on the river—and close at hand for easy reference—is the Corps' Master Manual. Like any scripture, the Master Manual inspires and incites. It is weighty—more than two pounds—and full of commandments as to where the water flows, when, and for whom. Written in stone long ago, these orders barely have changed over four decades. Recreation, fish, and wildlife come last in the litany "insofar as possible without serious interference" in the marching orders from Congress to the Corps.

Here in Omaha, the first order of business is taking stock of when it has rained along the river, and when it might, which takes some attention in a basin consisting of some 541,000 square miles. To calculate how much water might be entering the Missouri from the 220-plus rivers and streams that feed it, 14 Army engineers and civilian workers fix their eyes on an oversized computer terminal. As I watch, the Corps men and women study a series of National Weather Service reports.

A handful of reports forecast rain. This is news for rejoicing among the "god of navigable rivers" as the Army Corps of Engineers has been ordained by Congress. The Corps invokes satellites on high to consult readings from 800 rain gauges. The calculus of flow decisions also must factor in the volume of water in reservoirs behind the dams and the volume of water needed to generate the electricity that can be sold that day on the spot market.

Rain is forecast south of Sioux City, Iowa, so the team decides to release slightly less water into the lower stretch of river that flows from Sioux City into the Mississippi above

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St. Louis. The water gods command that the flow of river through Gavins Point be scaled back to 32,500 cubic feet per second from 33,000, as it had been. A flow of 33,000 cubic feet of water amounts to roughly 250,000 gallons, enough to inundate a football field to the depth of one foot.

They email their instructions to Gavins Point Dam, 160 miles north at the South Dakota-Nebraska border, where they arrive on Dennis O'Rourke's computer screen much faster than I can make the trip north to see them executed.

Releasing all this water from Gavins Point is a one-finger job, and I imagine Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" as O'Rourke stretches out his finger to enter the command. Instantly, there's movement beneath us in the 54,000-horsepower turbines that generate electricity from the raging water. Inside the turbines, 10-feet high, four-ton wicket gates close ever so slightly, like Venetian blinds, diminishing the flow of water from Lewis and Clark Lake, a reservoir on the north side of the dam, through the dam and out into the Missouri River on the other side.

The Corps of Engineers' control of the water on the Missouri stems from the 1940s, when Congress, having just beaten the fascists and in search of grand projects at home, began to assign the Army to dam and manage rivers. Two audacious bureaucrats—an Army engineer named Col. Louis Pick who had headed the Corps' Omaha office, and an easygoing assistant chief in the Bureau of Reclamation's Billings office named Glenn Sloan—had been pushing for a new regime of federal management of the Missouri. They were aided in their quest by municipal boosters from Montana to Missouri who were panicked by the river's regular floods and believed the river's barge industry would benefit if the vessels could more reliably traffic the river. Congress, its members smelling pork projects for their districts, agreed, allowing the Corps and the Bureau of Reclamation to combine their contradictory river development plans in the Pick-Sloan Act. Since then, the Missouri River has been managed under the precepts set down in the Corps' Master Manual, which makes the lower river's navigation for barge traffic a priority. But by the time the Corps completed its nine-foot-deep channel from St. Louis to Sioux City in 1981, the barge business it had been designed to accommodate was beginning to become economically obsolete.

Sunk!

"What we've got here is like an old-fashioned Western water fight," insists barge industry executive Don Huffman, a Missourian who retired recently after more than three decades in the barge business. "They want the water up there and we want it down here."

It takes perspective as long as Huffman's to defend the vitality of Missouri barging. We were headed toward success until the 1980 grain embargo, the barge industry says, one in a list of laments as long as it is arcane. Managed low flows have destroyed reliability and run off potential customers. We just need another chance. We're an industry under siege, facing off against conservationists, upstream recreationists, and shrinking revenues.

The Missouri River barge industry was bound for trouble. As suburbs have spread and trucking and rail have remained the dominant means of transporting goods up, down, and around the Midwest and Great Plains, it takes a mighty lean barging operation to steal shipping business. And barging on the Missouri—unlike on rivers like the Mississippi—has always been a dicey proposition. Even bank stabilization and the Corps' channel-digging haven't fully tamed this threatening, meandering river, as the Great Flood of 1993 showed. And the threat that some nesting terns will delay the shipping season another day, week, or month has taught clients that barging is not the most reliable way of getting your goods from Sioux Falls to St. Louis, or back.

And so the river's barging business has shrunk. An industry that was once essential for bringing all the produce of the Plains to market has dwindled to a $9 million annual business, according to calculations by a long-time ally of the barge industry—the Army Corps of Engineers.

Your horse is pregnant

Not long after that nine-foot-deep channel was completed, advocacy groups objecting to the principles governing the Corps' management of the Missouri began to organize. They believed that the Master Manual (with its *Dr. Strangelove*-like name) gave unjust preference to barge interests and their chief allies, farmers along the river. Meanwhile, the Fish and Wildlife Service, which is charged with enforcing the 1973 Endangered Species Act, began to document how the Corps' finger-of-God raising and lowering of the Missouri's water line had rather remorselessly disturbed the natural rhythms of life for the river's animals. Particularly, they argued, the Corps was endangering two federally protected species of bird and the pallid sturgeon, a beast with a flat, shovel-like snout and a reptilian tail that looks like a genetic concoction of dinosaur, shark, and alligator.

Second, there were the upriver states—Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota—in a region often plagued by drought, which argued that the manipulations of the river routinely starved their portion of the Missouri of needed water. North Dakotans are far and away the most zealous on this point: One of their distinguishing characteristics is a willingness to display bottles of their yellow, mineral-fouled water for any reporter or politician they meet. I have encountered these bottles everywhere from North Dakota to the halls of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. (One North Dakota rancher, Keith Farstveet, recalled, perhaps in jest, that he had once sent a yellowish sample of well water to a state lab for analysis. It came back with a note, which Farstveet recounted: "Your horse is pregnant.")

The upriver states, often in league with Indian tribes and recreation interests, typically lose Missouri River battles thanks to the critical, hand-in-hand relationship between the Corps and Congress that strengthened throughout those decades. The Corps, like the rest of the Army, serves the White House, but over the last century it has become effec-

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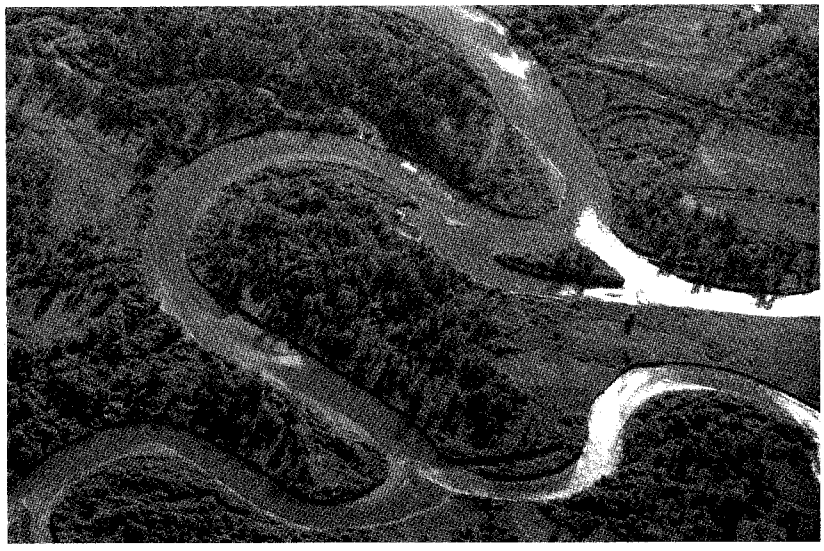
tively a branch of Congress. This tight relationship has long made sense: Both the Corps, which has wanted a grand role for itself, and Congress, which has wanted pork for favored districts, has had an interest in ginning up more and bigger Chamber-of-Commerce-pleasing projects such as dams, levees, and irrigation systems. By 1950, Harold Ickes, formerly FDR's long-serving Interior Secretary, was moved to write: "It is to be doubted whether a federal agency in the history of this country has so wantonly wasted money on worthless projects as has the Corps of Engineers.... No more lawless or irresponsible federal group than the Corps of Engineers has ever attempted to operate in the United States." It took another half-century for this mindset to trickle out beyond the world of liberal public-interest groups in Washington, but when it did, it meant trouble for the Corps.



"A cockamamie, godawful project"

In the new century, it wasn't just liberals like Ickes or advocacy groups who were squawking. Budget hawks and Republicans with environmental sensibilities began pressuring the Corps. U.S. Rep. Wayne Gilchrist, a Maryland Republican and ex-marine, summed up the growing criticism: "The Corps of Engineers has been overused by Congress," he told me in the summer of 2002. "They've dredged, they've levied, they've channelized, and they've degraded the environment of the United States more than they have needed to." For instance, independent experts at Virginia Tech concluded in 2000 that the Corps had overestimated by $144 million the benefits of a huge Mississippi project called Yazoo Pumps, which would drain 200,000 acres of Mississippi River wetlands to make new farmlands. Ex-Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt called the Yazoo Pumps plan "A cockamamie, godawful project."

Similar sentiments echoed around the Department of the Interior after a Corps project to rescue the Chesapeake's native Virginia oyster, which relied upon "carpet-bombing" one million baby oysters into the Great Wicomico River, ended in laughable disaster when a herd of native stingrays descended and devoured the shellfish. "We didn't really know anything about the cow-nosed ray," Corps project manager Doug Martin told the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot*. "It kind of surprised us."

The Corps' mismanagement of water and its often-bungled attempts to rework natural resources are being repeated around the country, its critics say. As municipalities in the South and East from Atlanta to Charlotte to Little Rock, have expanded out into fields, the strain they've put on existing water supplies has increased dramatically. "The level of conflict that we associate with the West is now occurring around the country," Robert Hirsch, associate director of the U.S. Geological Survey and the nation's chief water scientist, told me when I visited his office in suburban Washington, where the nation's water is watched and measured. "There are many concerns and even jealousy. Everyone worries that somebody's going to steal their water."

Rice growers in Arkansas, the backers and beneficiaries of a proposed $300 million Corps pumping project designed to keep their plantations irrigated, found themselves in conflict with a vast coalition of smaller farms, municipalities, and environmental groups, after the growers depleted a main aquifer with unsustainable farming. Residents along the Apalachicola River in Florida are furious at a decades-long Corps dredging project designed to build a canal for a barge industry that sends so few vessels downstream each month that locals can count them on a single hand. And the bursting-at-the-seams water needs of sprawling metropolitan Atlanta have meant a 10-year negotiation over how to distribute water among Georgia, Alabama, and Florida—a debate that shows no signs of reaching a conclusion.

In 2000, reporter Michael Grunwald wrote a series of stories in *The Washington Post* based on more than a thousand interviews and tens of thousands of pages of documents. The Corps was parlaying its congressional relationships into billions of dollars' worth of water projects, he concluded, and many of them charged heavy environmental costs for dubious economic value. At about the same time, the National Academy of Sciences took the Corps to task in two separate reports, saying the Army Engineers' methods and planning models for the Mississippi River were failing to balance economic and environmental benefits.

The tide seemed to be turning against the Corps. Besieged by Congress, environmental groups, and taxpayer advocates, by 2000, the Corps' then-new leader, Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, had begun to realize that his agency's position was untenable. "The greatness of the Corps is being able to say no when no is the right thing to be said," he told me at Corps headquarters a block from the new MCI Center sports palace in Washington, D.C., and you could feel the

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wheels beginning to turn.

But in the 2000 presidential election, Gov. George W. Bush won Missouri, a state that had gone for Democrat Bill Clinton by wide margins in the two previous elections, and his advisors believed he had done so in part by siding with Missouri commercial interests—and the Corps—against the environmentalists and upriver states. (St. Louis, after the 1993 floods, had been particularly aggressive about building on the river's floodplains; millions of square feet of mall topped off by a Bentley dealership now sit on what had been the flooded neighborhood of Gumbo Flats. Its businessmen, consequently, had a lot to lose if the Corps dialed back its management of the river.) So, it was no surprise that the Bush administration fought the dramatic flow changes, including a summer draw-down of water, that would de-emphasize barge traffic and make the river more friendly to wildlife and recreation concerns. Gen. Flowers's professed reform impulse was nipped in the bud, and the status quo prevailed.

The Missouri compromise

One of the current administration's least-favorite species, an aggressive, avowedly liberal federal judge, offered perhaps the biggest threat to that status quo. I first encountered Gladys Kessler in July 2003 in Washington, D.C., where she was charged with adjudicating a suit brought by environmental groups hoping to compel the Corps to protect endangered species by altering the Missouri's ebb and flow. On a hot summer day, Judge Kessler, a Clinton appointee and a founder of the activist Women's Legal Defense Fund, looked mad enough to climb down from the bench and throttle one of the half-dozen government lawyers frying on her griddle.

"The Army general counsel didn't think this was a significant enough matter to attend himself?" she asked one junior Army lawyer.

Nor had the Army's acting secretary, Les Brownlee, shown for a hearing. Brownlee had to be overseas, his staff had told her. Now, Kessler heard that he was busy at Fort Leavenworth. Which was it?

"I think that what was reported to my office was that he was in Europe, not Kansas. Kansas is a little closer than Europe," she snapped.

Environmentalists were downright giddy. Kessler ordered the Missouri to fall in order to protect nesting birds, the first such court ruling. Suddenly, the Corps' mission of river navigation—of keeping those barges running—had been trumped by the imperative of protecting species.

It had the makings of a seismic ruling, yanking away decision-making from the Corps, which had run Big Muddy like a private stream. There was a second trembler underlying her ruling: If Kessler's logic held, the balance of control over the river might shift to upper basin states for the first time in decades. And her logic might well apply to other river wars across the country.

Among recorders of the shock waves was a *New York Times* editorial writer who observed: "On the eve of the 200th anniversary of Lewis and Clark's historic journey, Americans can begin to hope for a better future for the river that carried the expedition westward." Judge Kessler threatened to become draconian, declaring that the Corps would be fined a half-million dollars every day they failed to comply.

But Kessler never had the opportunity to drag the Corps officers into her courtroom again, or levy her fine, or get draconian. What happened next was the judicial equivalent of the Major League Baseball commissioner stepping in with a scheduling change during the World Series, a classic *deus ex machina*. On the afternoon before Kessler's deadline, the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, of which I'd never heard but which had been set up in the 1960s to help federal courtrooms run more smoothly, transferred six Missouri River cases—among them the litigation in front of Kessler—to the Minnesota courtroom of a U.S. District Judge named Paul Magnuson, a senior, conservative jurist appointed by Ronald Reagan. The Bush Justice Department wasted no time in requesting a stay on the fine imposed by Kessler, and Magnuson granted it. Ultimately, his rulings would preserve the authority of the Army Corps of Engineers—and the status quo.

Till the bank shuts me down

An iron triangle of joined interests has kept the Missouri River battle stuck for so long: the Corps' political clout in Congress, the downstream barge industry, and Missouri's appeal as a presidential swing state. Arguably, the importance of each of those is diminishing, and the evolving economic realities suggest a coming political realignment on this most intractable of issues. Such a realignment might be triggered by a judge like Gladys Kessler; more likely, a future president will make the calculation that the political benefits of pleasing the senators in three states (N.D., S.D., and Mont.) outweigh the risks of crossing the barge industry in one state, Missouri. In any event, such a change is unlikely to occur under the present administration. The Bush White House has cast its lot with the downriver folks and has repeatedly cast a decisive veto to reject any efforts to alter the status quo.

So, for the moment, that status quo persists, and that's left some in an unpromising spot. When I spoke with Bob Shadwell in 2003, he told me he'd filed for bankruptcy protection. As the drought persisted, water levels along the Lake Oahe stretch of the Upper Missouri had continued to drop—by an amazing 11 feet. Cottonwoods submerged for a half-century protruded like a forest graveyard, he said, and getting on the river was spooky as well as dangerous.

A resort had closed nearby, a victim of drought and what Dakotans regarded as a water-allocation policy favoring downstream interests. But despite disastrous conditions, Shadwell insisted that he would not abandon his dream of running a fishing lodge with his family. "I can't give up on this," he said. "I'm going to hang on until the fat lady sings or the bank shuts me down." ◆

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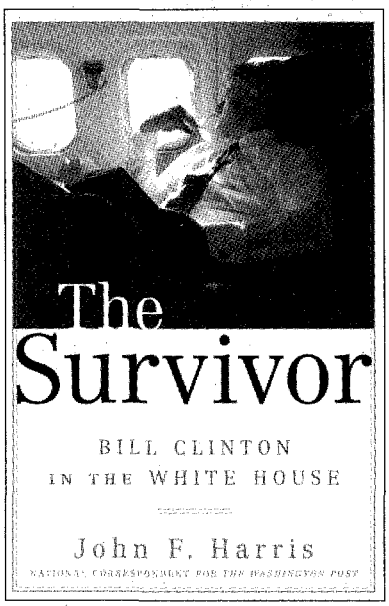
The Tragedy of His Success

The best and the worst of Bill Clinton were inextricably linked.

By Jeff Greenfield

By historical standards, President Clinton's presidency ended the day before yesterday, but book-length assessments have long since begun to appear. Read Joe Klein's *The Natural*, and you're examining a presidency that, on the domestic front at least, accomplished large things with incremental tools such as the Earned Income Tax Credit. Read *Legacy* by *National Review* editor Rich Lowry, and you're dealing with a pathologist's report on a fatally flawed man and message. Open Sidney Blumenthal's *The Clinton Wars*—if you can lift it—and there is Clinton as heroic figure, struggling to fulfill his promise while under withering, mendacious assault from ideological zealots driven to frenzy by Clinton's political skills. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, the Clinton administration has been painted both as a study in dereliction and—by former National Security Advisor Richard Clarke—a presidency far more alert to the dangers of al Qaeda than the Bush team.

Washington Post reporter John F. Harris, who covered the White House during Clinton's last six years, has made the most ambitious effort thus far: to chronicle the Clinton years in the context of the era's political trends and to connect the successes and failures of his presidency back to his character. It is a scrupulously fair-minded book, with plenty of ammunition for both



The Survivor: Bill Clinton in the White House
By John F. Harris
Random House, $29.95

Clinton's admirers and detractors. And if you're like me, you'll put the book down with the sense that you have read a modern reworking of a tragedy with a special Clintonian twist: The hero's flaws do not bring him down—he's earning, and is loved by, millions—but instead help put the party he led in its most perilous state in decades.

Bill Clinton arrived on the national scene after the Democrats had suffered three consecutive presidential defeats—losses that came in large measure because, as the young Arkansas governor told the centrist Democratic Leadership Council in 1991, "too many of the people who used to vote for us, the very burdened middle class we are talking about, have not trusted us in national elections to defend our national interests abroad, to put their values into our social policy at home, or to take their tax money and spend it with discipline." Much of *The Survivor* charts the serpentine course Clinton traveled in trying to pursue policies that reflected this conviction. Harris is particularly impressive in chronicling the fight between the liberal populist inclinations of some on the president's team (Labor Secretary Robert Reich, political aides George Stephanopoulos and Paul Begala) and the more centrist views of those aides who came from the financial establishment (Lloyd Bentsen, Clinton's first treasury secretary, and Robert Rubin, the president's chief economic advisor and later Bentsen's successor). Years after his 1993 tax and budget proposals squeezed through Congress—by a margin of one vote in each house—the American economy was in the best shape in its history. The Republican warnings that the budget was "a one-way ticket to recession" (Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas) and "a job killer" (then-House Minority Leader Newt Gingrich, R-Ga.) were proven spectacularly wrong.

(The centrality of this budget is so seared into the conservative mind that, to this date, you can induce group angina in the editorial board room of *The*

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Wall Street Journal by suggesting that Clinton's 1993 proposals helped convince the financial markets that the United States was serious about deficit reduction, and thus helped set the table for the economic boom of the 1990s. "No! No! It was the GOP takeover of Congress!" they will insist, without mentioning that the post-1994 Republican majority didn't repeal a single one of Clinton's tax hikes on the affluent.)

Yet, probe deeper into the budget victory, and you see the groundwork and the conditions for political disaster. On one level, the new president knew full well that the country was deeply suspicious of politicians in general, and particularly fed up with partisanship. (Even so tone-deaf a politician as the first President Bush knew; during his 1989 inaugural address, he literally reached out his hand to Democratic House Speaker Jim Wright as he promised an effort at bipartisanship.) Nearly one-fifth of the electorate had given its presidential votes in 1992 to Ross Perot despite clear evidence that he had left the Earth's gravitational pull. But before Clinton and his team had learned how to find the White House mess, the chances to claim the Perot vote and stake out the middle had been kicked effectively away.

Clinton's accommodating, I-agree-with-whomever-I-just-talked-to personality—rooted, Harris suggests, in Clinton's childhood struggles with his alcoholic stepfather—meant that he was not about to take on congressional Democrats by making reforms to the welfare and campaign finance systems his first orders of business. A disastrous transition, one of the worst in history, had made the deeply divisive battle over gays in the military the first issue his administration tackled. The dominant political influence of Hillary Rodham Clinton—a sign of the respect Bill Clinton accorded her judgment, and/or of the debt he owed her for "standing by her man" during the Gennifer Flowers affair—made the president determined to name a woman attorney general, which in turn led to Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood each withdrawing her name from consideration. And within days of his inauguration, Clinton had decided to make health care his key domestic goal and put Hillary in charge of it—a series of decisions which had even more disastrous results.

Part of the problem, Harris says, lay in stark political fundamentals: With the federal deficit ballooning, Clinton faced "a collision between the expansive promises he made in his dream days as candidate, and the cramped possibilities that awaited him as President." But that dilemma was exacerbated by Clinton's own faulty political judgment. In Harris's words: "[Clinton believed that] by doing bold things and quickly, Clinton would build support even among people who did not support him or his agenda...as it happened the most ambitious items on Clinton's agenda, raising taxes and expanding health coverage, were the ones for which he had the hardest time garnering Republican backing in Congress. Thus a President who urgently needed to build support with independent voters instead set off on a course that stamped him as a hard-core Democrat."

Reading *The Survivor* is to be reminded of the sheer chaos that at times seemed to swamp the White House, from the superficial (sloppy dress, "boxers or briefs?," chronic tardiness, all-night pizza pig-outs) to the problematic (a $200 haircut on Air Force One, the Whitewater and travel office dustups) to the tragic (the suicide of Deputy White House Counsel Vince Foster, one of Hillary Clinton's closest friends). It is also to be reminded of the extraordinary skills that Clinton brought to the office: a supple mind that grasped both the gravity of arcane financial issues (the Mexican *peso*, the Russian *ruble*) and the need to act. Here, and even more dramatically in Robert Rubin's *In an Uncertain World*, you see a Clinton who rebuts the notion that he moved only with the political winds and the polls. Moving to shore up foreign currencies had no political upside and carried with it huge political risks. But move he did, and the world's economic health was the better for it.

Most significant for me is how Harris charts the darker side of the Clinton years. With no ideological axe to grind, and with full appreciation for Clinton's skills and achievements, Harris recounts the events that made possible a Republican to challenge the Democrats' claims on the White House even after eight years of peace and prosperity—events that, he sometimes says and sometimes suggests, are rooted in the man himself.

Some of the most fascinating sections of the book deal with the Clintons's one-time political Svengali, Dick Morris, after the 1994 mid-term debacle gave Congress to the Republicans and threatened Clinton's political future. Morris—whose identity was hidden from most White House staffers and whose advice and memos bore the name "Charlie"—is here portrayed as the man who accurately calculated that Clinton "was masterful at tactical maneuvers, but only average as a strategic thinker." It was Morris who advised Clinton to "triangulate, create a third position, not just in between the old positions of the two parties, but above them as well. Identify a new course that accommodates the needs the Republicans address, but does it in a way that is uniquely yours." That, says Harris, armed Clinton with the confidence to face down the Republicans over the 1995 government shutdown and begin his successful fight for a second term.

We also see Clinton (wretched cliché approaching) "growing" in office, particularly in his role as commander-in-chief. When faced with the Serbian aggression in Bosnia in 1993, he dispatched Secretary of State Warren Christopher on a feckless mission to "persuade" the NATO partners to do...something. It took the pleadings of General Shalikashvili, Richard Holbrooke, and Anthony Lake to push Clinton into acting. By the time Kosovo threatened to explode in 1995, it was Clinton who was shoring up his wavering staff by telling them, "Folks, let's remember what the plan is and why we did this."

Throughout the book, Harris attempts to explain Clinton's presidency in terms of his character—its

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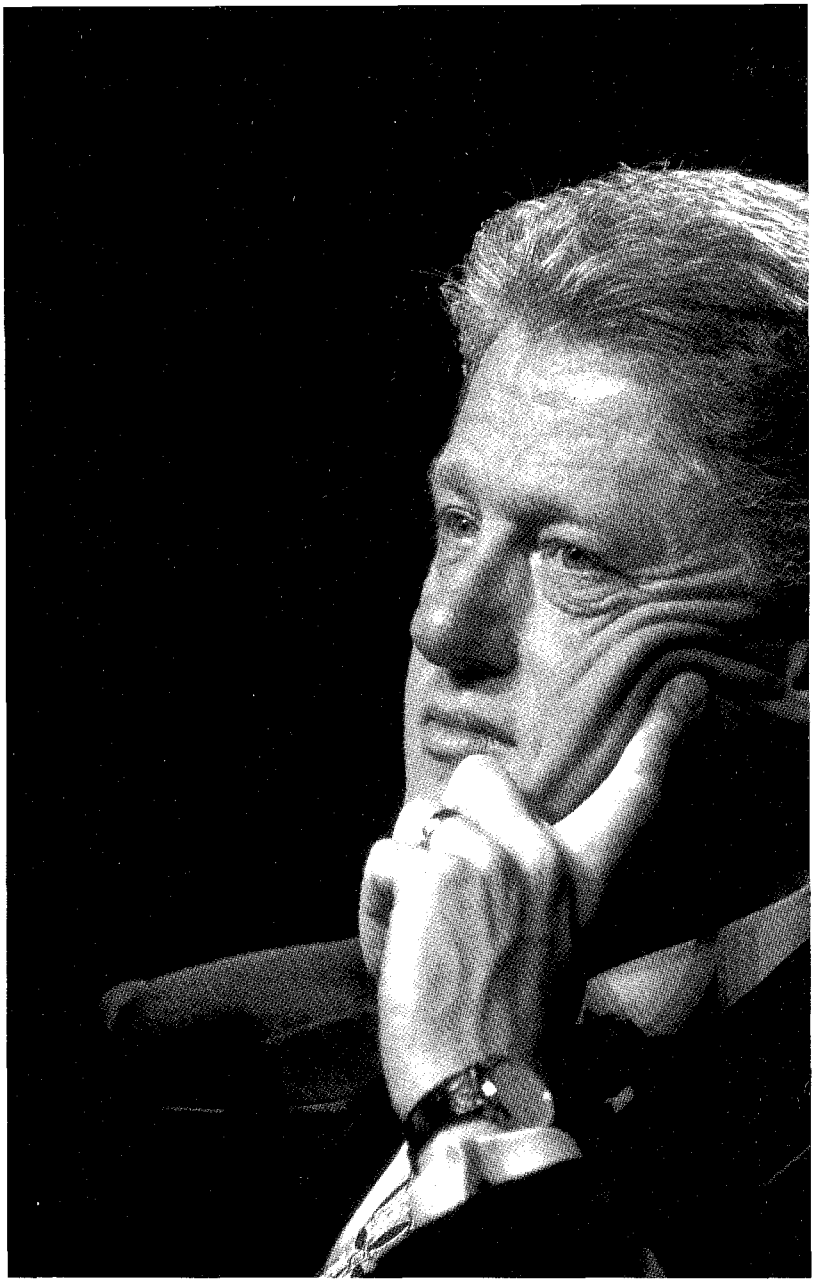
strengths and weaknesses. His instinct to wait as long as possible before making a decision and his hunger to establish all sides of an argument served him well in his economic decisions. But that same instinct, what Harris calls his "passivity," repeatedly deflected him from settling the Paula Jones case—which would have nullified Ken Starr's efforts.

This line of inquiry begs several other questions. Why did Clinton throw the White House open to so many disreputable characters in pursuit of needless gobs of campaign finance—especially when it was clear by early 1996 that Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan.) was not going to pose a real risk to reelection? Maybe because back in 1980, then-Gov. Clinton, confident of reelection, coasted through the final days and was unseated, almost ending his political life at age 34. Even before the country learned the name Monica Lewinsky, the fund-raising stories had cast a cloud over the White House that would grievously damage Al Gore's campaign (aided, of course, by Gore's unerring capacity to inflict even more grievous wounds on himself).

And why would a man whose presidential campaign had almost imploded in a sex scandal risk everything for a few furtive moments with a woman young enough to be his daughter? For one thing, Harris more than implies, it was not the first time in his presidency that he had run such a risk.

"An abundance of other rumors echoed," he writes, noting that several aides took it upon themselves to keep him from temptation. "When Clinton gravitated toward an attractive woman in a crowd, or vice versa, [one aide] would try to angle his way close to make sure he was in the line of sight of any cameras." Maybe, Harris suggests, it was the isolation that the White House imposes on any president, one felt particularly by an individual who loved nothing more than to join old friends on the spur of the moment for a late night supper. Or maybe someone who spent his whole life believing he was smarter and shrewder than anyone around him, and who had survived all threats, believed himself invulnerable.



Getty Images

While it is not an explicit part of Harris's theme, I came away from his account more convinced than ever that—whatever the case for or against impeachment—it is impossible to regard Clinton's behavior as a "private matter" in any reasonable sense.

Put aside the legalities, and Clinton's comic manipulation of language to argue, in essence, that while Monica Lewinsky was having sexual relations with him, he was not having sexual relations with her. (Note to married men everywhere: Do not try this argument at home.)

Apart from making the Oval Office the punch-line of countless dirty jokes, the scandal threw the White House into a struggle for political survival at a time when the dangers from a growing international terror network were rising? Harris shows that the Clinton White House was very aware of Osama bin Laden—but he also shows that Clinton's famed ability to "compartmentalize" was substantially mythical. He and his top aides were consumed by scandal and impeachment; at what cost we may never know.

Beyond these points, Clinton needed a united Democratic Party to survive impeachment, and that meant relying on the congressional Democrats whose appetite for, say, entitlement

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reform was non-existent. That meant that any attempt to shape long-term solutions to Social Security and Medicare with centrist approaches that challenged both parties—became politically untenable.

You can't come way from this book without a renewed sense of wonder at how one person could fuse sheer cognitive intelligence with unparalleled political skills. Had he been able to run for a third term, Clinton would very likely have won. Had Gore possessed half the political skills of his senior partner, he might have won decisively. Four years after that bizarre election, high-ranking Democrats were still wondering "what if—?" What if a few thousand voters in Palm Beach had marked their ballots accurately? What if Gore had been in the White House on September 11, 2001, defining his administration—and his party—as the protectors of a shaken populace? Yet some facts point clearly to the political consequences of Clinton's behavior and his inability to redefine his party in a broad political sense.

By the end of 2004, Republicans had won absolute majorities in two successive elections (after six elections when neither party had done so); they had remained in control of both houses of Congress for more than a decade (if we discount the temporary effects of Jim Jeffords's defection); they controlled a majority of state legislatures, the governorships of the four most populous states (for the first time ever), and as many voters called themselves Republicans as Democrats.

Could it have been different? A prominent therapist once recalled the words of her mother after a long and unhappy marriage: "We could have had such a wonderful life—if only your father had been a completely different person."

Make it "half a completely different person," and you have the coda to the tragedy.

Jeff Greenfield is CNN senior analyst. His books include *The People's Choice*, a novel, and *Oh Waiter, One Order of Crow*, which covers the 2000 presidential election.

Relative Truth

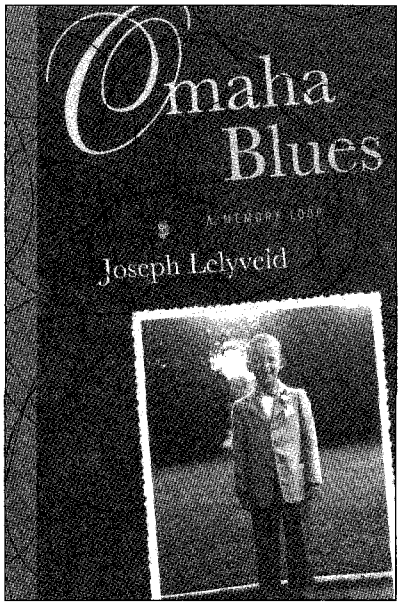
Joe Lelyveld takes on his toughest assignment: his family.

By Melinda Henneberger

If you could document that your mother really was no good at loving you, would you do it? Actually following the old newsroom admonition, "If your mother tells you she loves you, check it out," Joseph Lelyveld, the former executive editor of *The New York Times*, answers yes. And instead of settling, as most of us do, for he said/she said/I said—that is your reality and this is mine, OK?—he attempts to learn all that can be learned about his volatile, self-thwarting mother and his benign but unavailable father, as well as various earlier versions of the guy he calls "my sometimes puzzling self."

In *Omaha Blues: A Memory Loop*, he certainly buries the lede, but then, that's both the intention and the genius of the book, in which he writes, "History may be linear but memory, at least mine, isn't; it runs in loops." This particular arc of memory will inevitably be compared to Katharine Graham's memoir, *Personal History*, because it is just as fine and because Lelyveld has left himself just as undefended. Yet this is another kind of book, more jagged than a traditional autobiography, and not particularly chronological. It sets out subtly and concludes with such force that you may feel obliged to begin again and read *Omaha Blues* the way it was remembered.

Lelyveld, born in 1937, rose from copy boy to foreign correspondent to executive editor of *The New York Times* and won the Pulitzer Prize for his deeply reported book on South Africa under apartheid, *Move Your Shadow*. He ran the paper from 1994 to 2001 and then again, briefly, after his successor



Omaha Blues: A Memory Loop
By Joseph Lelyveld
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, $22.00

was forced out only 21 months after he had left. Yet this is an almost *Times*-less tale and contains not a word about just desserts served in record time. Instead, in retirement, he finds himself looking back, all the way to childhood. Then he assigns himself the scariest imaginable reporting job, that of investigating his own early life.

For years, Lelyveld complains mildly, the media writers who covered him tended to sum him up in two words: "rabbi's son," a phrase apparently opposite in implication to the stereotype of the wild-child preacher's daughter. He never sought to explain himself further, and it's not clear that he could have. As he tells it, he never had any firm handle on his own situation as a boy; he did not always know where his family would end up next or whether they would be

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there together. What seemed true one day might not last the night. And like not a few others in the profession, he seems later to have been attracted to the business of recording reality as a result. As a reporter, it must have been easy for him to find the lie or face even the ugliest fact of life with not so much detachment as relief.

But in this memoir, he goes further, and, with more emotional fearlessness than journalism ever requires, tests the reliability of everything he thought he knew about his early life. "I've been wandering the land, looking up old acquaintances or their survivors, indulging the urge pathetic old folks baffled by life's swift passage sometimes feel to find out what actually happened when they were too young or too stunned to take it all in," he writes. Inevitably, he discovers that some of his strongest memories have been doctored over the years. Others prove all too true. Starting at the age of 5, for instance, he was shuttled off to friends, relatives, and even a Nebraska farm family of Seventh Day Adventists, while his mother, an aspiring Shakespeare scholar, returned to Columbia University to work on her doctorate and mull over whether to stay married to the steadfast rabbi she blamed for derailing her career. This period was, and has remained, a confusing time for their son.

After reading a cache of old letters found in the basement of his father's former synagogue, Lelyveld no longer has to wonder whether his mother was avoiding him as well as his father in the summer of 1942. In those letters to his father, she repeatedly described him as an annoyance and wrote that she was absolutely "dreading the thought of coping with the noise again" when mother and child were reunited. Yet, true to himself, and to the newsman's religious belief in the salutary effect of even the most painful facts, Lelyveld seems unburdened now that he knows: That is how it was, then.

Just as his parents' marriage is finally breaking up in the summer of 1964, his father heads off to register black voters in Mississippi, a trip which ended in his being beaten by racist obstructers. "Some thirty years later," Lelyveld writes, "I opened a survey form from the town of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, that had been mailed to newspaper editors across the country. 'Have you ever heard of Hattiesburg, Mississippi?' the first question asked. I checked 'yes.' 'If yes, in what context?' it continued. 'My father was beaten there with a tire iron in the summer of 1964,' I wrote."

Former *New York Times* editor Joseph Lelyveld

He also recovers the traces of the mysterious sometime rabbi who befriended him at a time when he so needed attention that even the illusion of steadiness meant the world. This man, Ben Goldstein, had lost his job as rabbi of Temple Beth Or in Montgomery, Ala. after embarrassing the congregation with his passionate defense of the Scottsboro Boys, black men wrongly accused of raping two white women on a train in 1931. Lelyveld quotes a letter written by one of Goldstein's chief critics at the temple, saying that the rabbi, for all his gifts, just didn't "fit in our Southern civilization." Lelyveld writes: "That phrase, 'our Southern civilization' has a pitiable eloquence in this context, revealing as it does a hunger to believe that Temple Beth Or should 'fit in' and does fit in, even if its leaders haven't yet achieved the *summum bonum* of admission to the Montgomery Country Club. It says they'll always stand with those who exclude them, instead of those far more grievously excluded whom they also exclude."

Years later, Lelyveld's father ends up firing Goldstein again—breaking his son's heart in the process—after it comes out that he has concealed communist ties. Following the paper trail on his old friend Ben, Lelyveld writes, "I'm half amused to feel my excitement as I lay out my little trove of ancient. . .documents. It's as if the senior citizen I've now become is on the verge of cracking some big story." I laughed out loud at this, but was ridiculously thrilled for him, too, and for all that can be known if we decide to know it.

Still, as he says, no life can be shorn of

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all its self-deceptions. And, even now, Lelyveld seems to feel unduly responsible for his mother's suicide attempt in the spring of 1960. She had driven across the country from her home in Cleveland to New York, where he was working as a copy boy at the *Times*. Upon arrival, she checked into a hotel, stood him up for dinner, and swallowed some pills.

Lelyveld ties her attempt on her life to "a long, preachy letter" he'd sent arguing that she ought to relent and allow her mother-in-law to visit for Passover because, as he had pleaded, for Grandma "not to be invited for a year and a half, to be perpetually stalled, was to be left isolated, sad, and shamed before her cousins and the friends with whom she played canasta." Lelyveld recalls it as "three or four pages of scribbled indignation on lined legal paper." His mother finally relented, but a few days after Lelyveld's grandmother arrived, "skipped town with the result we now had before us."

Lelyveld surmises, "As my mom saw and felt it, Grandma's passivity—the finiteness, the absolute ordinariness of her expectations—stood for all the inertia, all the conventions, all the obstacles that checked her own progress on the path to the more independent life to which she felt entitled." He thought his mother finally had seemed at peace with her life, "until my bombshell landed, showing her, I now suppose, that she was still at cross-purposes with her family and herself."

Cross-purposes, *mon oeil*. Well-loved in his own marriage, he finally had felt safe enough to criticize his mother, and she punished him for it. When he wrote of her reviving in the hospital, "smiling the sweetest of smiles"—Ophelia awakes!—I personally felt like smacking her. That his own generosity towards her is so thoroughly undeserved is its own kind of happy ending, though—and proof that the well-lived life can obviate as well as follow years of therapy.

Omaha Blues is a remarkably discreet tell-all, and, absent the dead weight of self-justification, reads like someone's answered prayer, very much the meditation of the rabbi's son.

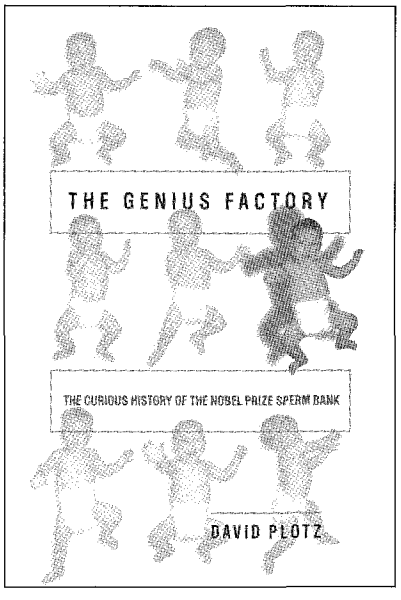
Melinda Henneberger is a contributing editor for *Newsweek* and a former *Times* reporter.

Who's Your Daddy?

Genes, aspiration, and the Nobel Prize sperm bank.

By Shannon Brownlee

You don't have to dig very far into our nation's intellectual record to find strains of eugenics and genetic determinism. Between the 1920s and the 1960s, some 60,000 Americans, the so-called "unfit," many of them retarded or physically handicapped, but some of them simply afflicted with being poor, were hauled off by state and local officials and forcibly sterilized. The rationale for this sorry chapter in American history emerged from the confluence of three strands of Anglo-American thought. Fearing overpopulation, Thomas Malthus argued in the late 18th century that the poor needed to die young, because Mother Nature had ordained their suffering from disease, malnutrition, and congenital defects. The second strand drew on late 19th-century Social Darwinism, which provided the pseudo-scientific underpinnings for both Malthus and the third strand, early 20th-century American racial and ethnic paranoia. It was the British who provided the intellectual power behind



The Genius Factory: The Curious History of the Nobel Prize Sperm Bank
By David Plotz
Random House, $24.95

Malthusian worries and Social Darwinism, but, as David Plotz points out in his curious new volume, *The Genius Factory*, it was the "can-do Americans who converted [it] into

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dismal practice."

It is against this backdrop that Robert Graham, an eccentric millionaire inventor from—where else?—Southern California, came up in the 1960s with the idea of a sperm bank devoted to spreading the seed of brilliant men. In 1980, when artificial insemination and anonymous sperm banks were becoming more popular, Graham founded the Repository for Germinal Choice, which was instantly dubbed the "Nobel Prize Sperm Bank" by the press. Graham's plan was to encourage a kind of positive eugenics; rather than weeding out the unfit, he hoped to create a generation of geniuses who would go forth, multiply, and counterbalance the rising tide of idiots. He dreamed of intelligent women—preferably those smart enough to qualify for the high-IQ club, Mensa—bearing a flock of uber-babies, endowed with the genes that would enable them to become scientists, inventors, and entrepreneurs.

Plotz, an editor at *Slate* magazine, has written an engaging and surprisingly funny book about the history of the Nobel sperm bank, the men who donated to it, and the more than 200 children it, er, spawned. (I should confess in the interests of full disclosure that I have pitched stories to David.) His book is populated with a cast of brilliant, sleazy, endearing, and unpleasant characters, all of them compelling, but only one of whom, William Shockley, was publicly identified as a Nobel laureate and donor. Shockley was himself a eugenicist and racist who once proposed that the government pay people with IQs under 100 if they would voluntarily submit to sterilization. When Shockley's participation became public, humorists had a field day. Herb Caen of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote that Shockley's connection to the bank was "proof that masturbation makes you crazy." "Saturday Night Live" ran a skit entitled "Dr. Shockley's House of Sperm," in which Rodney Dangerfield played himself as the most popular donor.

Once the Shockley connection was out, and Graham couldn't persuade any other Nobelists to donate, he was forced to turn to the next tier down in his pantheon of geniuses, accomplished Renaissance men who were young, smart, athletic, and handsome. Yet, as Plotz discovered, Graham's liquid nitrogen vats contained the seed of at least a few losers and nut jobs, one of whom lied shamelessly about his family's accomplishments and his high IQ.

Graham himself was no slouch when it came to weirdness. The inventor of plastic eyeglass lenses, Graham was intelligent and inventive, but emotionally a cold fish who neglected his own eight children and kept a list of "Great Men" he had met in his life. Unlike other sperm bankers, Graham didn't pay donors; rather, he wined, dined, flattered, wheedled, and cajoled them into wanting to pass on their gifts. He would fly across the country to meet with a prospective donor, take him to a lavish meal, and then invite him up to his hotel room to make a deposit, prompting one donor to tell Plotz that he now knew what it felt like to be a woman.

I found Plotz's book compulsively readable for the most part, especially when he is telling the tale of the American eugenics movement and Graham's obsession with spermatozoa. Many readers, however, will be more interested in finding out what happened to the sperm bank's children. Plotz first began writing about the Nobel sperm bank in *Slate*, where his stories prompted an outpouring of emails and phone calls from families hoping to find their donor fathers. The sperm bank concealed the identities of its donors, identifying them to women only by a color code: "Donor White" or "Donor Coral," for example. As a resourceful reporter, Plotz soon found himself serving as a "sperm detective," able to uncover the secret identities of several donors and hooking up fathers and children.

Plotz's writing loses some of its zip when he recounts the lives of the children and the moments when

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they finally meet their biological fathers; I also found myself wanting a more penetrating and forward-looking analysis of the deeper questions behind the urge to endow offspring with genius genes. Two decades ago, a couple hoping to boost their child's genetic inheritance had only a supposed genius sperm bank to turn to. Today, they can use genetic screening technologies to weed out embryos with undesirable defects, the gene that causes cystic fibrosis, for example, or fragile X, which leads to severe retardation. This sort of home-grown eugenics might seem like a merciful use of technology, yet when it's also possible to detect the gene or genes that contribute to short stature or the tendency to day-dream, will parents want those embryos tossed out of the Petri dish, too? One day, reproductive technologies may even allow parents to add genes for desired traits, potentially turning children into a kind of custom-ordered commodity like cars, rather than a gift to be nurtured toward adulthood.

Indeed, the belief that genes are destiny can all too easily warp the relationship between parent and child, even for the families whose children were born as a result of Graham's lower-tech grand experiment. As Plotz describes one boy's feelings about his heritage, "When your mom tells you you have to do better, you try to do better. But when your mom tells you your genes say you have to do better, it's different. You lose your free will." The irony, of course, is that, as far as Plotz could determine, most of the 215 children sired by the Nobel sperm bank have turned out to be about as accomplished and intelligent as their mothers. So much for the power of genetic patrimony.

Shannon Brownlee is a Bernard L. Schwartz senior fellow at the New America Foundation.

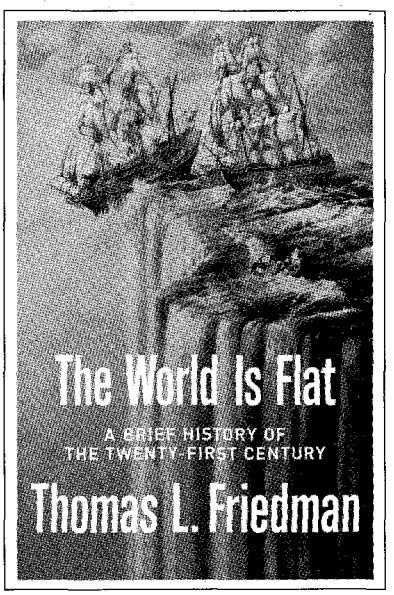
Falling Flat

Thomas Friedman's recycled view of globalization.

By Kevin Drum

Critics have accused Tom Friedman before of being willfully obtuse, but give him this much credit: He does not actually believe that the world is topographically flat. Friedman lives his literary life in a world of endless metaphor, and in his latest book he uses "flat" in the sense of "level playing field." His thesis is that a broad set of related trends have converged in the past decade, and this convergence allows almost anyone to do almost anything these days. Indians in Bangalore can write software as well as Americans in Baltimore; small companies can do the same things big ones can; freelancers can compete with IBM, and so forth.

If this sounds familiar, it's because it is. Despite the fact that Friedman claims to have discovered many of these trends only recently (about which more later), *The World is Flat* is really a sequel: It's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* on steroids. A friend of mine once referred to *Lexus* as "globalization porn," and *World* is written in the same mold. It's Friedman as evangelist to the masses, bringing an almost breathless sense of urgency and mission to his calling.



The World Is Flat: A Brief History of The Twenty-First Century
By Thomas Friedman
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, $27.50

The core of the book is a long chapter about "ten flatteners," 10 trends that he thinks are changing the world. It's an odd grouping, though, and it's hard to tell if some of his flatteners are there because he

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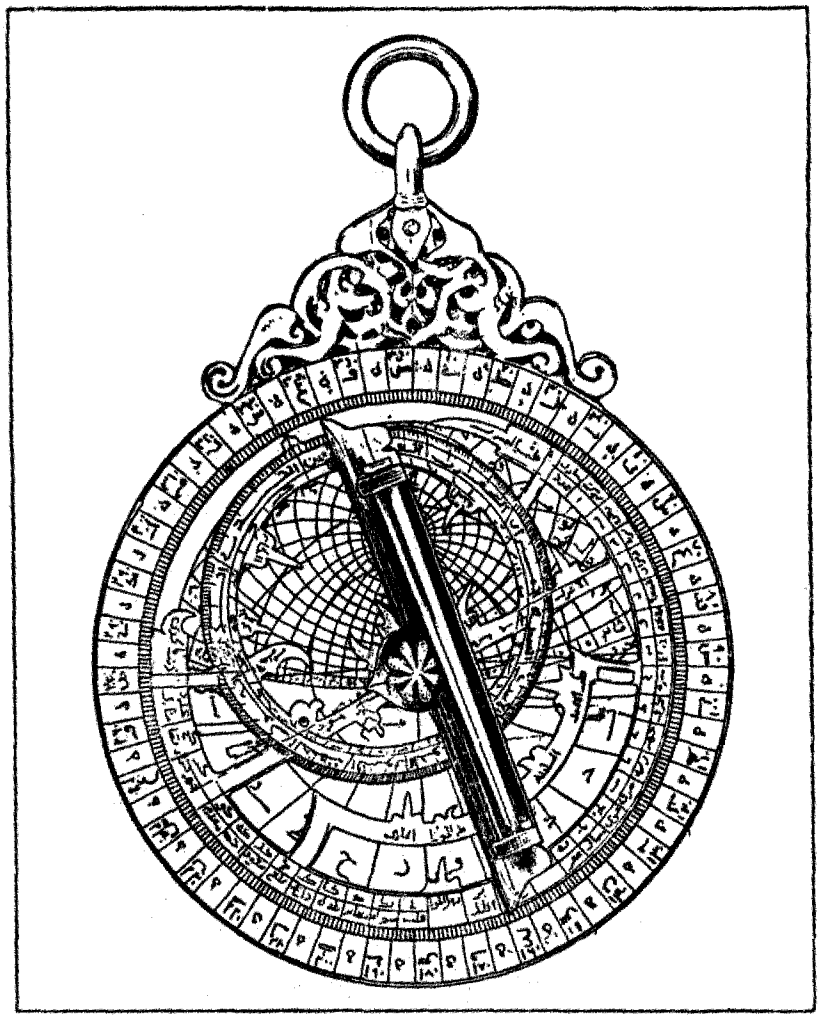

really believes in them or merely because he thought his list needed 10 entries.

His first two flatteners, for example, are the end of communism and the rise of the Internet, exemplified respectively by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the initial public offering of Netscape stock in 1995.

Fair enough. Those really are big trends with big consequences, and a serious popular analysis of them would be a welcome one. But then in the next breath, he lists the open source movement as another major global flattener—something that he presumably believes is roughly on the same level as his first two.

The problem is that this doesn't make sense. "Open source" is a way of developing software. Instead of being developed by large corporations that keep their underlying source code proprietary and secret, open source software is developed by loose teams of engineers who donate their time gratis. The resulting product is distributed freely over the Internet and the source code is openly available to anyone who wants to use it. Linux is the best known example. The Firefox browser is another.

But open source is something of a cult movement, born from the same roots as the "information wants to be free" Internet utopians—and while open source has had several successes in the past and will likely have more in the future, even its most ardent fans would be hard-pressed to keep a straight face while putting it on the same list that includes the century-long ideological battle between capitalism and communism.

This is what makes it hard to take Friedman seriously. Sure, his list includes plenty of genuinely important trends. The fall of communism and the rise of the Web are important, and so are the growing roles of China, India, and wireless communication.

But open source isn't even in the same league. Neither is Wal-Mart's supply-chain management or the fact that UPS has branched out into businesses beyond shipping packages.

What's worse, Friedman as much as admits that he was unaware of many of these things until a few months before he began writing the book. About the core convergence of trends that's the cornerstone of his book, he says, "Until I visited India in early 2004, I too was largely ignorant of it, although I was picking up a few hints that something was brewing."

This lends his venture a sense of shallowness and ahistoricity that it never overcomes. Because he doesn't have a deep understanding of the trends he's talking about (most are illustrated by a single big example, like Google or Wal-Mart), he seemingly doesn't realize that a similar list could have been written in pretty much any decade of the 20th century. His point about globalization could have been made 40 years ago by substituting Japan for China, Telstar for wireless communication, and mainframe computers for PCs.

The book also suffers from one of the worst features of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*: its naïve dotcom cheerleading. Depending on how you count, seven of his 10 flatteners are tech trends, and although he takes care in *World* to warn his readers that the success of globalization doesn't depend on the success of the dotcom revolution, he undermines that warning by spending almost the entire book evangelizing technology. He reprints entire PR messages from eager CEOs without any apparent sense that *of course* these guys think their companies are doing world-shaking things. I spent the decade of the 90s as a marketing

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executive at a software company, and these kinds of breathless paeans are sadly familiar to me.

But Friedman remains resolutely credulous in the face of these gales of corporate spin, and in the end, his corporate triumphalism becomes an *idée fixe*. Everything that matters is forcibly shoehorned into his tech-driven globalized future. Terrorism? Mostly important because it might slow down globalization. Nationalism? Slowly disappearing thanks to globalization. Energy? Mentioned in passing only as a problem keeping countries like Saudi Arabia from embracing globalization. None of these issues, or half a dozen others of equal importance, is seriously addressed in his book. If it can't be illustrated by an anecdote or a potted sketch of a company he admires, it doesn't seem to exist.

Instead we get stuff like this:

"In the coming phase of Web services-work flow, here is how you will make an appointment. Your computer will automatically check your calendar against the available dates on your dentist's calendar and offer you three choices. You will click on the preferred date and hour. The week before your appointment, your dentist's calendar will automatically send you an e-mail reminding you of the appointment. The night before, you will get a computer-generated voice message by phone, also reminding you of your appointment."

This wouldn't have passed muster in a 1953 issue of *Popular Science*. If anything, it trivializes an important tech trend—smart agents—by putting it in the service of something that we can already do today in less than a minute or two. If this is what computers are going to do for us in the future, who needs them?

There are other annoying feature of *Lexus* that return for encores in *World*, too. Friedman's tin ear for phrases like "globalization 3.0" and "compassionate flatism" is one. His hagiography of his subjects is another. Every CEO he talks to is brilliant, insightful, and far seeing. Raising his own everyday experiences to the level of epiphany is yet another. He figures out one day that Southwest Airlines allows you to print a boarding pass on your computer, and it immediately becomes a strained metaphor for a global convergence of technology and human psychology. The chairman of Starbucks tells him they offer soy milk because their customers asked for it, and he presents this mundane act of satisfying customer demand as something new and visionary.

What makes all this so frustrating is that it doesn't have to be this way. Friedman is a smart guy, a good reporter, and he knows better. In fact, his best writing—both in *World* and in *Lexus*—comes when he acknowledges the problems of globalization. In *World*, for example, he has a fine chapter about what he calls the "quiet crisis," a phrase he takes from Shirley Ann Jackson, president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Americans, he argues persuasively, are training too few high-quality scientists and engineers, are complacent about their place in the world, and are unwilling to seriously address educational issues today that will determine America's place in the world 20 or 30 years from now. And not only are we not motivating our own kids to earn the Ph.Ds we need to stay ahead, we're increasingly allowing fear of terrorism to close the door to foreigners who want to study here as well. Eventually, when the smartest people in the world are no longer Americans, America will no longer have a competitive advantage. For us, this is the soft underbelly of globalization.

There are broader downsides to globalization too, but although Friedman managed to write tellingly about them in *Lexus*, they are addressed only briefly and with little passion in *World*. In fact, he reprises one of his pet theories from *Lexus*, the "Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention," which states that no two countries that both have a McDonald's will ever go to war with each other. In *World*, it becomes the "Dell Theory of Conflict Prevention": No two countries that are both part of a major global supply chain like Dell's will ever fight a war against each other.

What's startling about this isn't the theory itself, but Friedman's admission that he didn't even start thinking about it until the late 1990s. After all, this is an idea with a long pedigree. Scholars have noted for decades that liberal democracies almost never go to war with each other, and as far back as 1910 Norman Angell famously— and with famously poor timing— wrote that the spread of mercantile interconnections had made conflict so irrational that large-scale war was henceforth futile. He had logic on his side, but that didn't stop large-scale war.

But whether Angell was wrong or just premature, Friedman doesn't address the issue even in passing. He simply writes as if this were a brand new insight of his own. Is this because he really thinks it is? Or because he figures his readers aren't interested in long dead history? There's no telling. But for readers who are familiar with this history, Friedman's lack of curiosity about it—in a field he's so obviously enthusiastic about—makes it hard to take him seriously.

It's unclear why Friedman seemingly ignores the rich literature available about globalization, satisfying himself instead solely with his own brief interviews with politicians and corporate chieftans. In the end, it's not so much that Friedman is wrong about the importance of globalization and connectedness—he's not—it's that without that broader perspective, his writing is shallow and forgettable. He's playing Chopsticks on a Steinway.

Kevin Drum is a *Washington Monthly* contributing writer and author of the *Monthy's* blog, "Political Animal," at: http://www.washingtonmonthly.com.

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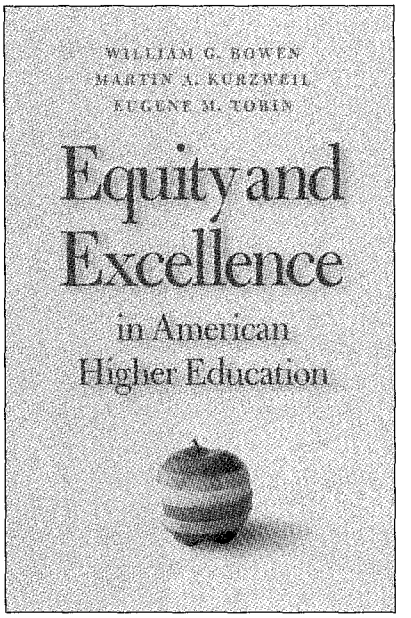
Class Action

Why education needs quotas for poor kids.

By Richard D. Kahlenberg

In 1998, William Bowen, a former president of Princeton, and Derek Bok, a former president of Harvard, wrote a highly influential defense of affirmative action titled *The Shape of the River*. While affirming the consideration of race in university admissions, the book dismissed the idea that colleges should do a better job of admitting low-income students of all races: "The problem is not that poor but qualified candidates go undiscovered, but that there are simply very few of these candidates in the first place." The role of selective universities in promoting social mobility, Bowen and Bok declared, was limited mostly to admitting more middle-class children to elite institutions: "It usually requires more than a single generation to move up to the highest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder."

That was then, this is now. Today, the current president of Harvard, Lawrence Summers, has essentially repudiated Bok's position and devised an innovative program to reach out to, admit, and pay the tuitions of qualified, low-income students. Summers calls the growing divide between the children of the rich and the children of the poor "the most serious domestic problem in the United States today." Bowen, the president of the Mellon Foundation, has followed suit, teaming up with colleagues Martin Kurzweil and Eugene Tobin to write a book advocating preferential treatment of poor applicants.



Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education
By William G. Bowen, Martin A. Kurzweil, and Eugene M. Tobin
University of Virginia Press, $27.95

Despite its uninspired title, *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education* provides a fascinating look into how the admissions process at selective universities helps certain groups and not others. Mellon assembled a new data set of 180,000 students who applied to be in the 1995 freshman class at 19 selective colleges (five Ivies—Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and the University of Pennsylvania; 10 private liberal arts colleges; and four top public universities).

While the under-representation of low-income students should come as no surprise, the details the authors amass to depict its extent can be shocking. Only 11 percent of students at the top-tier universities come from families in the bottom income quartile (compared with 50 percent from the top income quartile). Only 3 percent of students are both from the bottom income quartile and the first generation to attend college. These numbers track roughly with Anthony Carnevale and Stephen Rose's research for The Century Foundation which found that at the most selective 146 colleges, 3 percent of students come from the bottom socio-economic quartile and 74 percent from the richest.

The book essentially shreds the assertions of selective colleges that they have long provided a leg up in admissions to hard-working low-income students. For example, in defending the University of Michigan's affirmative-action policy in the Supreme Court, eight selective universities (including four of the five Ivy League colleges in Bowen, Kurzweil, and Tobin's study) claimed to give "significant favorable consideration" to students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In fact, the study found that, at the 19 universities surveyed, a significant edge is given to recruited athletes, legacies, and underrepresented minorities, but not to low-income students. Within a given SAT range, being a recruited athlete increases the chance of admissions by 30 percentage points (that is, for example, from a 20 percent chance to a 50 percent chance). Being an underrepresented

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minority boosts one's chance of admission by 28 percentage points and being a legacy by 20 percentage points. By contrast, poor kids receive "essentially no break in the admissions process; they fare neither better nor worse than other applicants." Whereas a college that was race-blind in admissions would be considered reactionary today, selective universities are absolutely blind to need, raising the question, the authors say, of "whether being need-blind is good enough."

Given the stark portrait of a university system seemingly uninterested in the ideal of social mobility, Bowen's suggestion that selective universities assign low-income students a preference in admissions akin to a legacy boost seems rather modest. Doing so would raise the percentage of students from low-income families from 11 percent to 17 percent without compromising academic quality. But why stop at the 20-percent legacy preference? Why don't the poor deserve the boost given to minorities or athletes? The authors don't provide a very convincing argument. "The idea of a 'legacy thumb' appeals to us in part because there is a nice kind of symbolic symmetry associated with it," they say, in which a deserved preference for those who have overcome obstacles balances out an undeserved preference for the wealthy. For all the appeal of symmetry, Bowen's proposal in this regard is unpersuasive. If anything, an honest attempt to make universities a more effective engine of class mobility would require giving the poor a significantly greater edge than the privileged.

Indeed, the authors' defense of legacy admissions indicates an irksome conservatism. One can be sympathetic to university administrators' pragmatic need to raise funds from alumni who expect a spot waiting for junior. But maintaining a "sense of historical continuity," as Bowen calls it, is hardly as compelling an interest as a more meritocratic campus and society.

Bowen doesn't defend every existing admissions preference, though. While legacy and minority admission preferences should be retained, he argues, athletic preferences could be curtailed without harm. Without debating the benefit a winning football team offers a campus community, it seems noteworthy that Bowen wishes to preserve those advantages based on the immutable factors of race and parentage, while dismissing those based on hard work and talent, even if those advantages aren't expressed in the classroom.

Still, Bowen's willingness to go to bat for low-income students is admirable, and he doesn't paper over the obstacles. Bowen and his colleagues recognize that moving toward a system of affirmative action for low-income students will be tough sledding. Politically, there are strong, organized constituency groups for minority applicants, recruited athletes, and legacies, and no comparable champions for the poor. And the program will require a 12 percent increase in grant aid. Ultimately, the authors argue, the federal government will need to step in with changes to the financial aid system to help colleges and universities lacking Harvard's endowment to afford efforts to promote economic diversity.

Using the affirmative action model to make it easier for some students to get into elite schools (necessarily making it harder for others) will bother many. And in a perfect world, no school would need to. West Point has come up with a way to boost the aptitude, not merely the admissions scores, of promising disadvantaged youths who might otherwise not measure up to its standards. Students who may have hidden potential are given the option of spending a year at the United States Military Academy Prep School, where a rigorous program gives students the time and training to get their academic skills up to snuff, giving West Point a more diverse student body without lowering its standards. A similar program for elite colleges could be a long way off; and until then, preference systems provide the best chance at offering poor kids a shot at top campuses. And if we're fated to make do with affirmative action for legacies and football players, offering a boost to the poor certainly would be the least likely to inspire a political backlash.

Public opinion polls have shown that Americans support the idea of providing a leg up to hard-working, financially disadvantaged students who have beaten the odds. Most of higher education has given lip service to this idea. To his credit, Bowen reexamined his earlier position, ran the numbers, and came out believing that the existing levels of economic stratification must not be allowed to persist. While some of us might like to go further and faster than Bowen, his new call, coming from the heart of the higher education establishment, suggests a very significant development: Belatedly, the elites are catching up to where the public has been for a long time.

Richard D. Kahlenberg, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation, is author of *The Remedy: Class ,Race and Affirmative Action* (1996) and the editor of *America's Untapped Resource: Low-Income Students in Higher Education* (2004). He is currently working on a biography of Albert Shanker.

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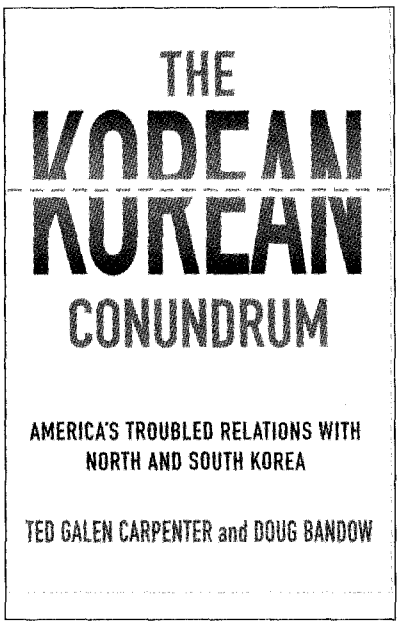
Seoul on Ice

Conservatives are talking about pulling out of South Korea. Big mistake.

By Soyoung Ho

This book brings a welcome revolution to recent American scholarship about the Korean peninsula: It actually focuses on *both* North and South Korea. It's no surprise, of course, that most writers have chosen North Korea as their prime topic: That weird, dangerous state is simply a juicier subject, with its epic isolation, creepy and seemingly unpredictable Great Leader, Kim Jong Il, and alarming nuclear development programs. But America's relationship with Seoul—based for a half-century on a shared interest in having U.S. troops serve as a preventative tripwire against the militaristic, communist North—is evolving, too. This transformation is brought about by a rising progressive nationalism in South Korea, which seeks independence from America—partly due to its economic might in Asia and its budding democracy. In addition, a weaker North Korea, despite its current belligerent posturing, has meant the possibility of war less likely than before. And that means that the future of both our relationship with Pyongyang and our security posture in East Asia are dependent, in large part, on what we do about Seoul.



The Korean Conundrum: America's Troubled Relations With North and South Korea
By Ted Galen Carpenter and Doug Bandow
Palgrave Macmillan, $26.95

The authors of *The Korean Conundrum: America's Troubled Relations with North and South Korea* would prefer that we wash our hands of the peninsula and its knotty North Korean brinkmanship politics, retreat across the Pacific and let these tense, feuding cousins sort things out for themselves. That shouldn't come as any great surprise, given their backgrounds: Ted Galen Carpenter and Doug Bandow are scholars—but not Korea specialists—at the oft-libertarian CATO Institute, a think tank known for arguing that America is committed to defending wholly unnecessary places abroad. These scholars are influential members of the conservative foreign policy establishment—Bandow, in particular, has been a prominent defender of President Bush's nomination of U.N. skeptic John Bolton as ambassador to that body—and if their audacious prescription for the Koreas doesn't match the administration's current stance, then it's a safe bet that this book is getting a hearing within the conservative elements of the Departments of State and Defense, where skepticism about the future of an American commitment to South Korea, which costs $1.38 billion a year to maintain its units based there, has been percolating.

Carpenter and Bandow argue that, even if a war breaks out on the peninsula, it would not harm America's national interest: "Today, the Koreas are a peripheral interest at best.... There are strong personal and cultural ties between Americans and Koreans; however, the [Republic of Korea] has little security relevance. War on the Korean peninsula would be tragic, but essentially irrelevant to America were it not for the U.S. troop presence." Though they also argue that the importance of Korean trade to our economy has been overblown, and cite media reports on anti-American sentiment festering in Seoul, the book's main argument for troop withdrawal is simply the savings it will bring to the Pentagon budget. They also argue that, given violent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, it would make sense to reconfigure troop deployments.

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Carpenter and Bandow think that South Korea has benefited quite disproportionately from the presence of our troops, while the United States hasn't gotten much in return. It's certainly true that the Republic has done well under American protection: Today, South Korea has the 10th largest economy in the world and belongs to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the rich countries' club, a stark contrast to its $90 per capita GDP in the early 1960s. *The Korean Conundrum* rightly notes that such economic success was made possible largely by American security guarantees, which let South Korea spend comparatively little on its own defense and focus instead on civil development, building its economic infrastructure.

If our wealthy East Asian security clients, Japan and South Korea, are so worried about staying safe, say Carpenter and Bandow, let them pick up the bill. "Why can Seoul not shorten the process by acquiring U.S. weapons? And why did it not begin to develop new weapons over the last two decades, as economic growth has delivered the necessary resources for increased military investments?" they complain. It's certainly true that it lies within the means of Japan and South Korea to supply the materiel and human resources for their own defense. But American presence, hence its forward leadership, has been a stabilizing factor throughout Asia. It isn't only about simple troop numbers.

Moreover, there's a binary calculus to deterrence these days: Either you've got nuclear weapons or you haven't. North Korea, it seems, now has nukes. So do we. South Korea and Japan don't. In this crude arithmetic (the same terms in which North Korea seems to understand the fight for peninsular supremacy), fully funded South Korean army divisions and Japanese naval battalions won't be enough to deter North Korea from invading. They would need to develop nuclear weapons. Even the garrisoned communist cadres north of the 38th parallel understand the real weight of American power.

So what might happen if the United States abruptly withdrew all troops? Sure, Asian countries could and would set the rules after American troops departed. In such absence—while North Korea would still remain dangerous—South Korea could choose to go nuclear, deciding that such weapons are the cheapest and the most effective means of defense. Japan and Taiwan might well follow suit. These CATO scholars actually argue that a nuclear Korea or Japan or Taiwan may not be a bad idea.

But it would be a grave mistake to reverse the process of denuclearization and non-proliferation, thereby enabling any Tom, Dick, or Harriet state to wield dangerous weapons in response to a neighbor's suspected arsenal. China would certainly be alarmed by nuclear powers popping up in the region. Moreover, what if China, not the South, absorbed North Korea, as some experts predict? Even the authors would be alarmed by the implications of such an event for the United States. The American troop presence in Asia has been a stabilizing force, sobering Japanese ambitions which might boil up should serious American footprints be lacking. So, both Japan and China

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take some strategic comfort in a continued American presence.

The authors make much of Seoul's apparent "ungrateful" ill-treatment of America. They argue that many younger South Koreans perceive the United States as a bully, pointing to the massive candlelight vigils and demonstrations against us that took place in 2002 after the United States failed to offer a "proper" apology after two girls were run over by an American armored vehicle. After that incident, "[a]nger spilled out of universities into the middle class and seemed to grow along with the nuclear crisis." And, again and again, the authors complain that South Korea has been too slow, stingy, and begrudging to send troops to Iraq when the United States has asked for its help: "That is, Washington should continue to defend the ROK; Seoul should do nothing to aid the United States."

But each of these worries seems misplaced. The demonstrations reflected a passing emotional outburst. South Korea has grown from a society that harbored pervasive and violent anti-American sentiments in the 1980s into one that is critical only of specific U.S. policies or issues. South Koreans would criticize President George W. Bush's axis of evil rhetoric, unilateral invasion of Iraq, and North Korean policy; they do not hate all of America. (To the point, in a global survey, Koreans had a relatively favorable view toward Bush's reelection compared to other countries in the world when there were no pressing issues to gripe about.) And it's hard to see how much more Seoul could have done to help in the Iraq effort—the contingent of South Korean troops sent to an internationally unpopular war was the world's third largest, trailing only the United States' and the United Kingdom's.

The present drawdown of U.S. troops may be the best ultimate outcome. Although phasing out all the troops in the far future may make sense, it does not in the near- to mid-term. If the United States scrapped the 50-year-old alliance and pulled out its troops now, when all Asian nations look to America for leadership, this would pose a fundamental risk to U.S. credibility; i.e., if you don't support an ally, there is a grave implication that you will not support other allies, either. An American presence in Korea is important to balance China's growing regional ambition. Moreover, the alliance benefits America, giving it access to much of Asia while at the same time reducing pressure on other U.S. military bases in the region.

Carpenter and Bandow do lauch one good attack against Seoul: South Korea wants the benefit of the alliance but doesn't want Washington to dictate its terms: "Although South Korea was not inclined to take over its defense even as it emerged on the international stage as a significant economic player, its evident success led to domestic calls for winning a greater say in the operation of the alliance." South Korea does need to do more for its own defense and be more responsible worldwide. It has made a responsible start by raising defense spending, and it has reached a pair of smart compromises with the United States, which all eventually draw the number of American troops in country down from 37,000 to 25,000 and move a large military base from downtown Seoul, where the U.S. military presence has created near-constant friction with residents, to a more remote region.

Still, the sides seem headed, in the long term, for a more decisive separation. The Pentagon is convinced that the utility and viability of the U.S.-ROK alliance has gone down. South Koreans disliked Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's handling of the issue of redeployment even if an eventual phasing out of troops should prove of national interest to both parties. That Rumsfeld has been both insulting and condescending in his approach only maximizes resistance and emotional backlash. South Korean officials have been privately upset over the issue as they were merely notified of America's intention to reduce troops in South Korea, though the United States has since shown more willingness to discuss the matter.

But the proper management of this likely parting of ways—while not letting these petty acrimonies prompt a retreat so quick that it destabilizes this crucial region—remains a point of shared interest. American and Korean strategists need to decide how to balance the growing regional role of China. Will U.S. troops retain the capacity to deploy off the peninsula, as some still argue that they should, or will Korea mature fast enough to play that "balancer" role (smoothing over frictions between China and Japan without necessarily siding with the United States) in the foreseeable future?

This stark, even polemical book may finally prove useful: By raising the possibility of such a dramatic solution, Carpenter and Bandow may force American strategists in Washington and Seoul, within and outside of government to figure out what they really think about the Korean conundrum and push it through to some rational next stage. South Korea and the United States must be honest about where each stands, which they have not done for at least two decades, as the old Cold War centered on Russia is replaced by struggles centered on Pyongyang and Beijing. The issue is beyond what to do with North Korea. The United States should think about what it would mean to have an alliance only with Japan in Northeast Asia while South Korea became more "neutral" and sided even with communist China. And South Korea must think about whether it wants a future without the United States. The alternative, in the near future, seems very risky.

Soyoung Ho is an assistant editor of *The Washington Monthly*.

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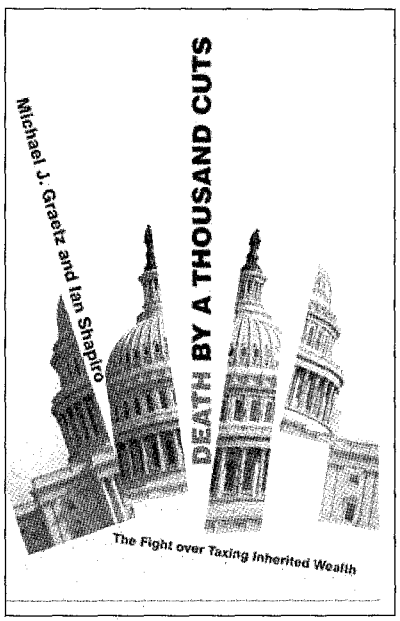
Heiristocracy

How the GOP got away with cutting the estate tax.

By Daniel Franklin

To the Democratic mind, there is no tax more just, more moral, more American, than the estate tax. If we must tax someone, who better than those fortunate few who have gobs of money and did nothing to earn it; the children of the wealthy? Every dollar taken from the ranks of Bergdorf blondes is a dollar that need not be taken from working Americans. And so that poor, beleaguered Democratic mind could be excused if it falls into a sputtering, senseless rage with the recognition that Republicans have turned eliminating a levy on the luckiest and least worthy into a legitimate populist movement.

How a populist movement arose to eliminate the most populist of taxes is a political mystery without parallel. Not since World War I has a progressive tax been excised altogether, and yet four years after President Bush signed a phase-out of the estate tax, he has yet to reap a word of backlash. Tempting as it is for Democrats to chalk up their loss on the estate tax to Republican lies or sleight of hand tricks like renaming it "the Death Tax," *Death by A Thousand Cuts*, by Yale political scientists Michael Graetz and Ian Shapiro, demonstrates that the story is far more complicated.



Death by a Thousand Cuts: The Fight over Taxing Inherited Wealth
By Michael J. Graetz and Ian Shapiro
Princeton University Press, $29.95

No doubt, the estate tax debate is riddled with misinformation and misperception. But the phony facts mask a fundamental and far-reaching change in how Americans look at the morality of taxation, one upon which Democrats appear to be on the losing side. Democratic leaders comfort themselves by saying, if people only knew the facts. But "the Democrats' failure," the authors write, "goes to the very core of their approach to convincing the American public that they are right about two of the most fundamental questions in any system of government: how and why the country should tax its citizens."

For all the book's many virtues, thrills are not among them. Those looking for a page-turner that captures the excitement of the legislative process should look elsewhere (and let me know when they find it). Instead, the book reads like a narrative of how termites ate your house. Out of sight and unopposed, the advocates of repeal just munched and munched and munched until support for the tax caved in like a corroded joist.

The story begins in the late '80s, as liberals would expect, with a few rich folks who wanted to keep more of their money. A key early figure in the movement was the boutique financial planner Pat Soldano, who handled the assets for the Mars candy bar family, the Gallo wine family, and the heirs to the Campbell's soup fortune, among others. The effort to repeal the estate tax was just another aspect of Soldano's investment advice. For a relatively small investment—a Heritage study here, some lobbying fees from Patton Boggs there—families might one day reap tax breaks worth hundreds of millions of dollars. It's a bet a growing number of wealthy families were willing to make, offering the leaders of the repeal movement all the resources they would need to make their case heard.

Since the plight of the Gallo heirs was unlikely to draw many tears around the country, activists

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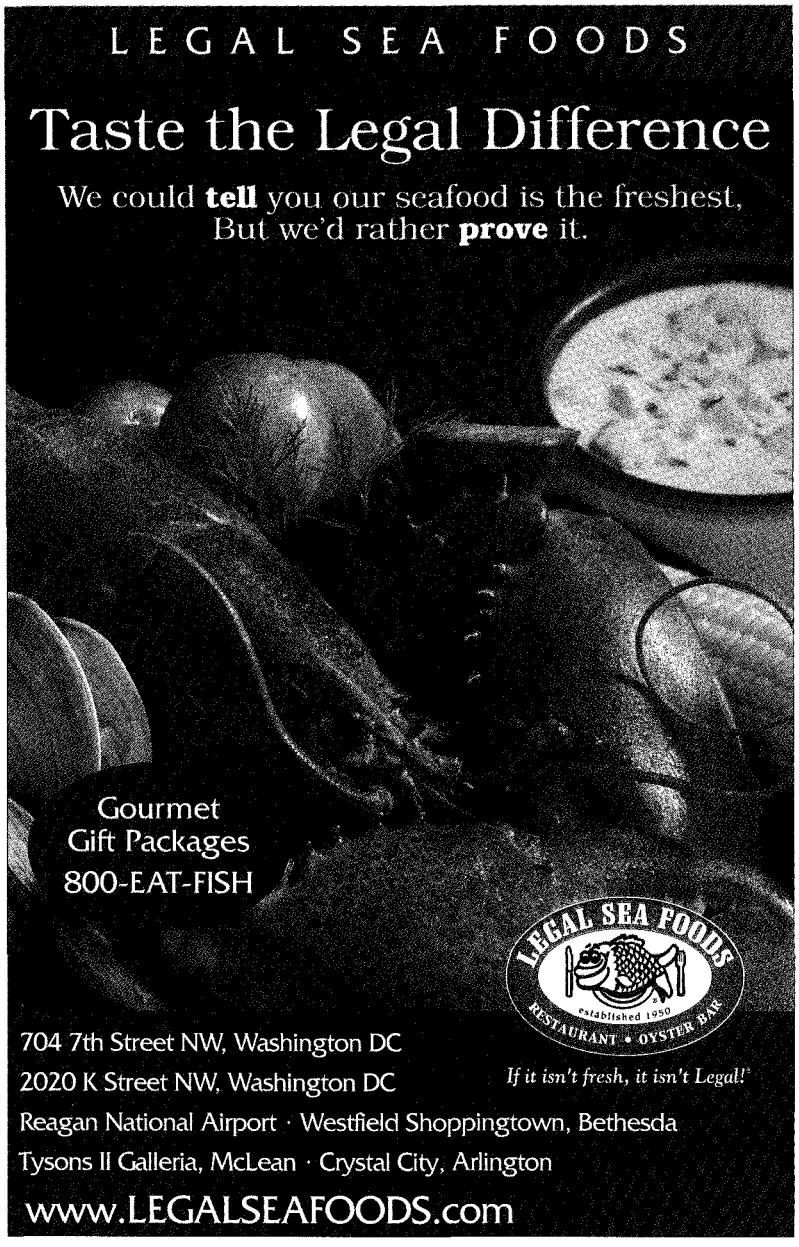
smartly latched on to the emotional appeal of family farmers and small business owners. Despite a mountain of data proving that only a tiny fraction of farmers and entrepreneurs were affected, the activists showed that an anecdote beats a statistic any day. One of the most effective was that of Chester Thigpen, an African-American tree farmer from Montrose, Miss., recruited by Jim Martin, one of the leading repeal activists. The grandson of slaves, Thigpen was heaven-sent. Less than a month after Republicans took control of Congress in 1995, Thigpen was testifying before the House Ways and Means Committee. "Right now, people tell me my tree farm could be worth more than a million dollars," he said. "All that value is tied up in land or trees. We're not rich people. My son and I do almost all the work on our land ourselves. . . . My children might have to break up the tree farm or sell off timber to pay the estate taxes when I die."

Thigpen's story was recycled so many times that at one point, a strategist considered renaming repeal bill The Chester Thigpen bill. There was only one problem. Thigpen's farm was not, in fact, subject to the estate tax. It handily skated in under the minimum threshold, according to Thigpen's son. When the authors asked Chester's son, Roy, if his father had written his own testimony, the son broke up laughing. "Some professors," wrote it and gave it to him to read. Repeal activists were untroubled, as they often were, by facts. Thigpen was an effective stalking horse, and his story democratized the image of the repeal effort.

As the numbers of Americans supporting repeal grew, Democrats responded with the same uncomprehending refrain: But it doesn't affect you. Illinois Senator Dick Durbin tells the story of how he was once asked by an O'Hare Airport baggage handler when he was going to do away with the Death Tax, "so I won't have to pay it." The moral of the story, of course, was that, if only Americans knew the facts, support for repeal would melt away to the two percent of Americans actually affected. In fact, the numbers tell a different story. One CNN poll found that nearly 40 percent of Americans believe that they are in the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans or will be there soon. Only 26 percent had given up hope of reaching the top of the income ladder, a cold splash indeed to dedicated class warriors. For the Democratic strategy to work, they would first need to convince Americans that they were worse off than they feel. Who would vote for someone who tells them they have no chance of achieving the American Dream?

But good old American blind optimism only accounted for some of Americans' resistance to Democratic logic. More troubling for Democrats was the fact that they lost the moral argument—the idea that the fairest tax was the one that hit those most able to pay. Americans increasingly bought the Republican line that the estate tax was doubly unfair—first because it treated some Americans differently than others. Second, because it taxed the same money twice: when it was earned, and later when the earner died. The absurdity of the argument of double taxation has been



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made before: All kinds of money is taxed more than once, most frequently when, as the case of the estate tax, it changes hands. But facts, as Ronald Reagan said, are stupid things. Polls showed that nearly 90 percent of Americans believe the estate tax is unfair. In 2003, a NPR, Kennedy School, Kaiser poll found that only 15 percent of Americans wanted to preserve the estate tax. One respondent, a retired transportation director for a Delaware school district, said that he knew his estate would not be big enough to be taxed, but he wanted it eliminated anyway. "I knew this gentleman, he's worked his life doing what he does, and does it very well, and I know his kids. He told me once—he said they would have to sell 90 percent of what he's invested in order to pay his taxes. So, you know, it's just not fair."

If it felt like repeal activists were pushing at an open door, it's because, to a large extent, they were. Democrats offered no real alternative to repeal, and no effective argument for preservation of the estate tax. Not unlike the Republicans, the Democratic Party is driven by its constituent groups. But where was the constituency for the estate tax? The pain of the tax was concentrated to a small group with the means to fight for their interests. The benefits, meanwhile, were spread thinly across 150 million taxpayers. The liberal Center for Budgetary Priorities and Policy didn't begin working against estate tax repeal until 1999, four years after Chester Thigpen testified to the Ways and Means Committee. In one clever measure of political attention, the authors note that Republican pollsters had conducted 20 separate studies of the politics of estate tax repeal. Democrats had conducted four polls, and three of these were done after the 2000 election, when, to a large extent, the fight had already been lost.

Graetz and Shapiro are at their best when depicting the subterranean interplay between activists, think tanks, lobbyists, and donors that fuels federal politics. If there's a weakness in their description of how Washington works, it's in their gross underestimation of the influence of campaign contributions. The authors dismiss as naïve the suggestion that congressmen fought for repeal for the sake of campaign donations. But I think it's Graetz and Shapiro who are being simplistic. The authors seem to take on face value various congressmen's argument that contribution limits prevent any one donor from wielding undue influence. This is true, as far as it goes. But when well-connected fundraiser organizes an event where $1,000,000 is raised from 1,000 different donors, it's as if he gave all the money himself. His calls get answered. Moreover, when politicians spend so much of their time cultivating people wealthy enough to give a campaign contribution, it has a tendency to shape their thinking. The authors suggest that personal contacts, rather than campaign contributions, persuaded members of Congress, including many Democrats, to support repeal. They quote Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-N.Y.) saying, "everyone in the House knows one person who's affected" by the estate tax. But the chances are, they met that person at a fundraiser. After years of attending fundraisers with the same group of donors, the line between friend and donor gets awfully blurry. A former Senate Democratic leadership aide once complained to me of having to redirect Senators' attention when they returned from fundraising trips. "A fundraiser is not a focus group," he would remind them. It's the rare politician whose perspective is not affected by his or her constant exposure to the wealthy people whose money they need to get elected.

The authors' suggestion for how Democrats can rebut the Republican onslaughts falls short for me, as well. Graetz and Shapiro chide the Democrats for letting Republicans focus attention on the working rich who accumulated the estates, rather than the decadent children receiving them once they died. Many of the people taxed could easily be made to look like the "Paris Hiltons of this world," rather than the Chester Thigpens, they argue. Perhaps this would have helped. But since 40 percent of the country believes that they are or will be in the wealthiest one percent of which Democrats speak, it's just as likely the Republicans could have responded by saying, "Those are your children they're talking about." Even reviving the original argument for the estate tax—preventing the establishment of an aristocracy built on generational wealth—seems doomed to fail. After all, Paris Hilton became Paris Hilton with the estate tax in effect. It seems probable that the ease with which the wealthy circumvent the tax has become one of chief causes of its demise, an argument the authors neglect. Since it accomplishes no clear good beyond the money raised, the estate tax becomes like any other: a necessary evil. Republicans have shown that in the minds of Americans the step from necessary evil to just plain evil is a short one indeed.

If the estate tax debate shows anything, it's that tax politics based on distinguishing Americans by class has failed the Democrats utterly. Something new that reaffirms the connection between all Americans and our obligations to one another, rather than our differences, must soon take its place. For Graetz and Shapiro are profoundly right when they discuss the implications of the estate tax debate for politics and the nation. "This death tax effort has been a critical piece of an attack on the very idea of progressive taxation in America.... They know that what they want cannot be accomplished at a fell swoop. Hence their strategy: death by a thousand cuts. What strategy is there on the other side?"

Daniel Franklin is a consulting editor of *The Washington Monthly.*

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IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT PROSTATE CANCER
READ THIS

By Richard Huemer, M.D.

The U.S. Government has announced that they will be conducting the largest ever study on Cancer. The study will determine what are the long-term effects of Selenium and Vitamin E on the Prostate Gland and its potential for protection against Prostate Cancer.

Never was a word more feared than Cancer. Everyone is afraid of it; but, if one form of Cancer strikes at the definition of a man, it's "Prostate Cancer". It not only threatens a man's life, but his manhood. That is why this study currently under way by the Government is of such interest. WHAT IS IT THAT THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS THAT WE DON'T?

A ten-year U.S. trial that began in 1983 failed to find evidence that 200 micrograms of selenium daily could prevent skin cancer, but men taking it had 63 percent fewer cases of serious prostate problems than those who took only a placebo. "AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION COULD BE WORTH A POUND OF CURE...."

Scientific research has been showing for decades, from studies of antioxidants and life style changes, that they may have a positive effect on the prostate. Once someone is diagnosed with Cancer it is easy to follow a long-term plan. Yet, if that same effort were put into prevention, the effects on a man's life could be quite different.

Prostate Cancer is a fact of life. It is fair to say that with all of us living longer, prostate cancer is more certain to be a "when?" question, rather than an "if?" question for most men.

Whitewing Labs is not waiting. We've added Selenium to our Prostate formula. We already had the Vitamin E and a whole lot more in the formula. Prevention could be as simple as taking two tablets twice a day!

PROSTSAFE® FOR THE RELIEF OF THE SYMPTOMS OF BPH (BENIGN PROSTATIC HYPERPLASIA).

The changes in your body are so gradual it takes years to notice. You go to sleep at night and gradually your sleep is interrupted more and more to urinate. You realize that you are tired in the morning. As you age, the symptoms gradually get more intense, as the overall health of your prostate declines. Then you realize that you may be faced with a more serious health problem.

PROSTSAFE IS A SAFE, RELIABLE FORMULATION THAT CAN HELP YOU IN DEALING WITH BOTH THE SHORT AND LONG-TERM SYMPTOMS OF PROSTATE HEALTH.

HUNDREDS OF TESTIMONIALS FROM SATISFIED USERS

- "My annual PSA tests have been in the 1.1 to 1.3 range since taking Prostsafe. I no longer have a suspected enlargement."
  T. Spickler, Reynoldsburg, OH
- "My PSA went from 7.5 to 2.9 in three months of taking Prostsafe and my urination is back to normal."
  G. Bueton Tuscaloosa, AL
- "Prostsafe has helped my PSA go to 2 from 16 to 18."
  M. Mills, Rockford, IL
- "Since I have been taking Prostsafe, my PSA has been in a level 0 to 1."
  S. Paglione, St. Lucie West, FL

UNCONDITIONAL MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

All of our products are sold with an unconditional 30 day money-back guarantee. You may return your purchase (even the empty bottle) for a prompt refund of the product price.

Supplement Facts

Amount Per Day		% Daily Value
Vitamin A (as beta carotene)	17,000 IU	340%
Vitamin C (as zinc ascorbate, ascorbic acid)	320 mg	532%
Vitamin E (as alpha tocopheryl acetate)	240 IU	800%
Vitamin B_6 (pyridoxine HCl)	70 mg	3,480%
Selenium (AA chelate)	200 mcg	286%
Zinc (AA chelate, ascorbate)	50 mg	334%
Copper (gluconate)	1 mg	50%
Saw Palmetto extract	460 mg	*
Golden Rod (herb)	100 mg	*
Hydrangea root extract	190 mg	*
Bee pollen	170 mg	*
L-Glycine	150 mg	*
L-glutamic acid	100 mg	*
Siberian ginseng extract	100 mg	*
L-Alanine	50 mg	*
Silicon (magnesium silicate, dioxide)	50 mg	*

*** Daily Value not established**

HERE'S AN EXTRA BONUS:

A HEALTHY PROSTATE CAN IMPROVE YOUR SEX LIFE!

There are additional means of prevention and treatment that can improve your prostate health.

- A low fat diet
- Reduce intake of caffeine
- Limit cholesterol
- Limit beer consumption

Order today and receive a **FREE** videotape **"The Natural Path of Men's Health: *Prostate Care*"**.

Taking **Prostsafe** will provide you with relief of the symptoms of BPH. 2 tablets, twice a day, "an ounce of prevention could be worth a pound of cure". Act now and order **Prostsafe** today.

WHITEWING LABS
DEPT 1688
17939 CHATSWORTH ST. STE 408
GRANADA HILLS, CA 91344-5615

PROSTSAFE® - Natural Prostate Relief

6 Month Supply	(Save $89.75)	PS6	119.95 ___.___
2 Month Supply	(Save $9.95)	PS2	59.95 ___.___
1 Month Supply		PS1	34.95 ___.___

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